

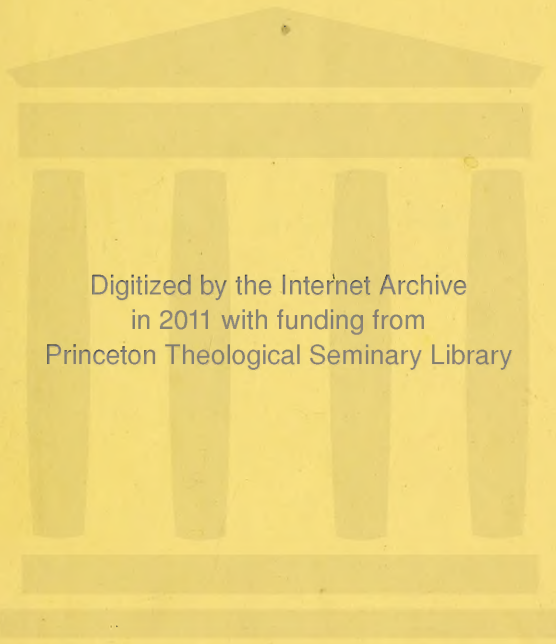
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AND

INFANT BAPTISM,

A DIVINE OBLIGATION.

IZEAL HARTSH

1871-1872

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# INFANT BAPTISM,

A DIVINE OBLIGATION:

RECOGNIZED, SANCTIONED, PLEADED, AND PRACTISED, BY  
THE APOSTLE PAUL;

AND DEFENDED FROM EVERY KNOWN OBJECTION  
HITHERTO BROUGHT AGAINST IT.

BY THE REV. WM. THORN,  
WINCHESTER;

Author of  
"MODERN IMMERSION NOT SCRIPTURE BAPTISM;"  
"DIPPING NOT BAPTIZING," ETC.

LONDON:

JACKSON AND WALFORD,  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD;

WARD AND CO., AND J. SNOW,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1850?

# INFANT BAPTISM.

1844

## A PRACTICAL CATECHISM.

By the Rev. J. H. THOMAS.

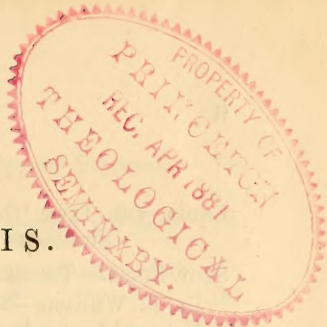
1. The subject of infant baptism.
2. The scriptural authority for infant baptism.
3. The reasons for infant baptism.
4. The mode of infant baptism.
5. The effects of infant baptism.
6. The duties of parents and the church.
7. The duties of the baptized infant.
8. The duties of the church.
9. The duties of the state.
10. The duties of the world.
11. The duties of the church.
12. The duties of the church.
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17. The duties of the church.
18. The duties of the church.

WINCHESTER:

N. WARREN, PRINTER, HIGH STREET.



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## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

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I. That the Apostles and Primitive Christians practised Infant Baptism, I believe as firmly as I do that they lived and preached the Gospel of Christ. My judgment on this point has been formed and fixed after a protracted and careful examination of the Word of God, and the writings of numerous talented and earnest controversialists, of conflicting sentiments, on this long agitated subject. I also feel satisfied that Infant Baptism, whether regarded in reference to the various aspects it presents, or to the different purposes it contemplates, is highly instructive, impressive, and important; that it is calculated to be of great spiritual service to parents and their offspring, to all thoughtful observers, and to the general body of Christian professors; that it beautifully harmonizes with the condescending and benevolent scheme of Christianity; and that a cessation, or a material diminution, of its performance, would be a serious loss to the Churches of Christ. The reader will, therefore, I hope, give me credit for being actuated by sincere and Christian motives, in undertaking this further defence of Infant Baptism, against the opposing efforts constantly made to destroy it, by numerous Antipedobaptist preachers, writers, and people; and will also know how to account for any special earnestness discoverable in this humble advocacy of its lasting and universal administration.

II. I believe that the duty of Baptizing Infants is clearly deducible from the sacred Scriptures—equally with that of admitting females to the Lord's Table, and more so than that of observing the first day of the week, erecting places of Christian worship, supporting our great benevolent institutions, family worship, attending week-day religious services, or periodically uniting in social meetings for prayer—obligations which no persons can wilfully neglect, and still righteously claim to be regarded as enlightened, spiritual, and consistent followers of Jesus Christ. All genuine and intelligent Pedobaptists feel that they have good Scriptural grounds for practising this rite; and, with these convictions, they entertain a strong sense of duty to perform it. Their con-

sistency in this case all honest men must approve. Mr. Hall says, 'Every conscientious adherent to Infant Baptism reveres the authority of Christ no less than a Baptist, and is distinguished by a spirit of submission and obedience to every known part of His will; and, as this is all to which a Baptist can pretend, and far more than many, who, without scruple, are tolerated in our churches, we are as far as ever from ascertaining the specific differences betwixt the case of the Pedobaptist, and other instances of error supposed to be entitled to indulgence.' p. 96. He adds, 'Whoever attaches importance to the covenant under which God is supposed to enter with the seed of believers, must highly disapprove the conduct of the parent who withholds from his offspring its constituted seal; nor is it possible for him to cherish the esteem due to him as a Christian, but by imputing his conduct to involuntary error.' p. 263.

III. In securing a foundation on which to erect my defence of Infant Baptism, I might have constructed one much broader than that on which I have chiefly built my assumptions, by uniting separate but congruous materials, from various sources in the Word of God. But in the present discussion, I have placed the principal stress on the declaration of Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. x. 1-14—introducing other corroborative passages of Scripture, as the work progressed; and chiefly for the purpose of answering objections to the line of argument primarily pursued in this treatise. From that text, I think I have fully and unanswerably proved, that the inspired and divinely directed writer *Recognised, Sanctioned, Pleaded, and, consequently, Practised, Infant Baptism*: and, therefore, that it is the duty of all ministers to dedicate children to Christ, and thereby to initiate them to the educational privileges, spiritual oversight, and religious obligations of the Gospel, by Water Baptism. To render the reasonings, by which I have endeavoured to sustain my assumptions, as comprehensible, by all classes of readers, as the nature of this long controversy will admit, I have arranged the discussion under plainly-headed and duly-numbered parts, sections, and minor divisions; have employed the simplest style of expression; and have adopted the clearest methods of illustration, I could possibly command.

IV. I have selected the before-named passage of Scripture, as the chief basis of the present discussion, not because I regard it as containing the only decisive proof of Infant Baptism, but because it refers to the first recorded instance of Water



Baptism, as a religious ceremony, administered on a large scale; and because I consider, that, though it has been often incidentally mentioned, or cursorily examined, by writers on this protracted controversy, it has not received the attention it justly demands, in reference to the *Proper Subjects* of Christian Baptism. If the views I have taken of the apostle's language be correct, and if the inferences I have drawn from it be legitimate, I presume the candid and intelligent reader will deem the doctrine of Infant Baptism to be fully established—and that, too, from this single passage, as if five hundred had been adduced in its support. Many an important truth is based on a single text or two of divine revelation; and no wise man rejects a doctrine because God has not reiterated his mind in the matter a hundred times over. It will, however, be seen, that while I have made Paul's address to the Corinthians the basis of my argument, I have corroborated my interpretation of his words by numerous other texts and considerations which, I believe, will render the practice of Infant Baptism still more manifest and imperative. Could our opponents bring forward but *one* passage from the Bible, more clear and conclusive against Infant Baptism, than that of Paul, in the text, is in favour of it, they would feel that, without any other testimonies in their behalf, their position was sustained beyond any reasonable apprehensions of defeat. But such a text will not be soon forthcoming.

V. That the baptismal act of John, at the Jordan and elsewhere, was not regarded as a new, strange, or unmeaning ceremony, by any of the multitudes who attended his ministry, is very evident, and generally admitted, even by our most earnest and intelligent opponents. Mr. Noel observes, 'It follows, 'that the Baptisms of the disciples (John iv. 1-3) resembled 'in its general character, the Baptism by the priests, and the 'Baptism by John.' *Subject*, p. 61.—That it was viewed and received as a service with which the people were all personally or historically familiar, we deem unquestionable. Such a general baptizing, too, was manifestly expected by them when Christ should come, or when Elias, or some other great prophet, should be again raised up among them. These Baptisms, whether administered by the harbinger, the disciples, or the apostles of the Messiah, were in no case denounced as innovations, novelties, or unscriptural rites, by their numerous and captious antagonists. On the contrary, they were approved of, and eagerly submitted to, by nearly the whole of the Jewish nation, as ceremonies with which they were perfectly conversant; and in doing so, they never deemed themselves to be

countenancing any act adverse to the practice of their fathers, or to the sacred ritual institutions of the old Testament, to which they were then so devoutly attached. 'Baptism with 'water,' says Dr. Urwick, 'as a religious ceremony, did not 'originate with our Saviour, or with John his forerunner: see 'Mark vii. 3, 4; Luke xi. 36; but was of a much earlier date.'

This fact being admitted, especially by the recent leading controversialists of both parties, the inquiry is, Where shall we find the commencement of this water Baptism, as a religious and divine act, ordinance, or rite? We are first directed to the baptismal initiation of heathen proselytes to Judaism. But, evidently, this was but carrying on a prior custom and ceremony in Israel. We are next told to look to the ancient washings, purifications, or consecrations, among the Jews themselves, and which are designated *Baptisms*, (*Greek*,) by an inspired writer of the New Testament. Heb ix. 10. But we are invited to go still farther back, to discover the commencement of this rite; and, following the guidance of Paul, in the passages previously referred to, we come to the great national baptism in the Red Sea. Beyond this, we cannot certainly or safely retrograde. Therefore, on this sublime and extensive baptizing, we may safely take our stand, and from it gather all the information and arguments it supplies, in illustration and defence of Infant Baptism, under the Gospel dispensation. As we trace back the Eucharist of the New Testament, with certain abridgments or modifications, to the Passover in Egypt; so we may trace back Infant Baptism, with certain alterations, to the passage of the Hebrews through the Red Sea—Paul being our infallible guide in this interesting investigation.

VI. Few persons, moderately conversant with the baptismal controversy, as carried on during the last two hundred years, can have failed to perceive, that, after all the discussions on other branches of the inquiry, the prime point at issue is not, whether there be any positive command to baptize Infants, or any indisputable instance of Infant Baptism, recorded in the New Testament; but whether, under the former religious dispensations, from Abraham to Christ, children, as far as practicable, had always, invariably, and ostensibly, been associated with their parents in those moral, social, and religious rites and advantages which Jehovah conferred on his favored and chosen people? This question, I unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative; in this all Pedobaptists accord; and I am not aware, that the negative has ever been held or advocated

by our opponents. Now, into this state of ecclesiastical relationship none were brought by birth, but always by undergoing the initiatory rite of circumcision, or of Baptism, or of both; and by no other ceremonial of which any notice is preserved in the Inspired Writings.

I further assert, that we have not the slightest intimation in the Sacred Scriptures, warranting the assumption, that infants ever were, or ever were to be, expelled from this domestic and ecclesiastical connexion with their parents and the ancient church, previously to, or during, the dispensation of the Gospel of Christ—certainly not by himself, before he took some of them in his arms, and declared that of such was the kingdom of God. And until the opponents of Infant Baptism shall have clearly proved, from the divine testimony, that infants and children were subsequently and positively excommunicated from the visible congregation, assembly, or church of God, by Christ or his apostles; their divine right to religious association with their parents, involving religious tuition, and other religious advantages, as far as they are capable of receiving them, must remain inalienable to the end of the Christian dispensation; and that their introduction to this status, and these privileges, must be obtained through Water Baptism.

Having been recognized as visible, though juvenile, members of the congregation of God's chosen people, during, at least, fifteen hundred years, or during the entire previous continuance of the duly officered and organized church of Jehovah, from Moses to Christ; we dare not believe, without the plainest and most conclusive evidence of the fact, that children were expelled from these intimate and interesting relationships, on the coming of the Messiah into the world, or during his reformatory processes of the previous religious, ceremonial, and political economy, or in the subsequent extension of his manifest reign among all tribes and countries of the earth. Children having been an integral, essential, and important, part of the previous religious communion, it rests with the advocates of exclusive Adult Baptism, and church or congregational membership, to adduce chapter and verse in support of the doctrine which would drive the youthful offspring of believers into a directly opposite, a less favorable, and, relatively, a degraded position, to that which they sustained during so long a period, under the dominion and fatherly care of the same Lord and Christ—who, be it remembered, was as truly the supreme Head of the Patriarchal and Mosaical churches for-

merly, as he is of the Christian system in the present age. This relationship, I repeat, is the chief point for consideration, and to it I have had frequent occasions to recur in the following discussion. The onus of proving, that children should continue in their former relative position with their parents and the professors of the true religion, fairly rests, not on Pedobaptists; but it rightly and solely devolves on our opponents, if able, to prove that they should not.

VII. As the young Israelites were brought into a visible covenanted connexion with the God of Abraham and of Moses, either by circumcision or baptism, separately or combined; we are warranted in relying on the administration of either of these rites in the former economy, as guaranteeing to children of the present dispensation, a title to union with their parents, in their position as avouched and visible disciples of Christ. Both these ceremonies symbolised the same doctrine, and introduced the subjects of them to similar great religious privileges and responsibilities. And had not circumcision been virtually or actually done away by the death of the Redeemer, we might now have either circumcised or baptised children to God, or have observed both these rites, as was evidently done by many Jewish converts to Christianity in the earlier times of the Gospel economy, and, indeed, for a long time after the Saviour's ascension to heaven. That these rites were essentially alike, we have the testimony of eminent Baptist writers.

Rev. Mr. Tombes says, 'Baptism was a concomitant of 'circumcision, if not ancients, and was in use among the 'Jews for many ages, together with circumcision, though not 'as a sacrament.' p. 80. He also grants that Baptism and circumcision are alike sacraments for the spiritual part, viz:— 'sanctification by the Spirit, and justification by the blood of Christ.' p. 83.—Rev. Mr. Noel: 'Circumcision to the Lord is 'similar to Baptism to the Lord, both external acts betokening 'the same duty of sanctification and dedication to God.' *Sub.* p. 14.—'As circumcision was intended to signify the circum- 'cision of the heart, the renunciation of all sin, it was enjoined 'upon children and servants to show that God required this 'renunciation of sin by all the covenanted people. It was the 'token that they must be a holy people to obtain his blessing; 'but it involved no profession of piety, and was no sign 'of existing religious character.' *Ib.* p. 173.—Dr. Carson: 'Circumcision and Baptism correspond in meaning. They 'both relate to the removal of sin, the one by cutting, the 'other by washing.'

To these declarations, I will add one or two more on this important point, from two episcopalian divines.—Dr. Wall: ‘It is not erroneous to maintain, that both circumcision and Jewish baptism might be types and forerunners of Christian baptism. The other sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was signified by more than one judicial rite.’—Mr. Burkitt: ‘So little is said in the New Testament about baptizing infants, because the custom of baptizing them was common, and the practice constant in the Jewish church, at and before our Saviour’s time. While circumcision was the covenanting sign, baptism was the purifying ceremony, among the Jews; for when any of the Gentiles were admitted into the Jewish church, both parents and children were first circumcised, and then washed, in token of cleansing them from the filth of their heathenism. So that baptism among the Jews constantly went along with circumcision till our Saviour’s time.’ This practice of both circumcising and baptizing children continued among the Jewish converts to Christianity, for a very long period after the apostolic times. *Taylor’s Letters*, Let. iii.—Ultimately most Christians gave up circumcision and retained baptism. Though the Coptic church ‘practice both circumcision and baptism’ down to the present time.—‘*Faiths of the World.*’

VIII. I have selected the Apostle’s reference to the baptism of the children of Israel in the Red Sea, as the assumed beginning of baptism, first, among the Jews, till the appearing of John, the harbinger of the Messiah, and, secondly, of baptism unto Christ, under the Gospel dispensation. The proofs in support of Christian baptism, derivable from the practice of circumcision, may be seen in many treatises of great research and worth, in this controversy, and the force of which, in the judgment of the reader, will remain entirely unaffected by the present argument. Infant Baptism rests on a two-fold basis and practice under the law. I have selected, for present discussion, Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians, above referred to. This ground of evidence in favour of our procedure, while in no degree impugning the other, appears to me more ample—embracing both sexes more expressly—and as being more readily comprehended by the majority of readers, than that derived from the other initiatory rite of circumcision, among the descendants of Abraham. At any rate, in this section of the controversy, it has not received the attention that has been given to circumcision, and certainly not so much as it undoubtedly demands.



The significance and value of Paul's reference to the baptism of the Israelites in the sea, in explaining the nature of Infant Baptism, and towards settling the questions involved in it, will appear in the body of this treatise. I will cite a remark or two from our opponents, simply to show, that my views of the passage are neither novel nor uncorroborated by Baptist divines.—Mr. Noel: 'The Hebrews were all' [old and young] 'marked to be the disciples of Moses, by following 'him in the Red Sea.' *Sub.* p. 14.—Mr. Killingworth: 'The 'generalsense' [of being baptized unto Christ] 'is most evidently 'this, that we are baptized unto the solemn profession and 'acknowledgment of his religion, just as the Jews being 'baptized unto Moses, implied in it, in the sentiment of 'St. Paul, their owning him as their leader.' p. 87.—'St. Paul, 'for a prelude to Christian Baptism, fixes on the Israelites 'being baptized in the cloud and in the sea'—*Ib.* p. 93—meaning, that the Apostle regarded this baptism unto Moses as the beginning, and, on the whole, as a pattern of Christian Baptism.

IX. The reader should clearly understand, and constantly bear in mind, that, in reality, our *principal* dispute with the Baptist denomination is concerning the *Mode*, and not the *Subjects*, of baptism. This has been fully proved in the preface to the author's volume on that specific section of our controversy; and I am not aware that the sentiment has ever been seriously denied by any of our antagonists. Some good people, not deeply versed in the merits of this debate, tell us, that the form of baptizing is of comparatively little importance; the question, 'Who are the *proper subjects* of it?'—involving the chief point of sectarian difficulty. This, however, is a grave misapprehension. 'The Baptist Bible Translation 'Society' was established, and is still carried on, at a heavy annual expense, not to support Adult or Believers' Baptism, but to promote the total immersion of the people. To evince the anxiety of our opponents to defend their dipping system, it may be remarked, that they repeatedly refer to the baptism of proselytes to Judaism as fully illustrating that of John and our Lord's apostles. And their reason for doing so is a belief, (unfounded it is true), that the proselytes were all immersed when they were purified and inducted to the Hebrew religion. They are reckless of the fact, that children, as well as their parents, were proselyted and baptized at the same time, and in the same way. Consequently, they appear prepared to damage their evidence in favour of Adult Baptism only,

provided they can get any testimony, however weak and inconclusive, in favour of immersion! In truth, with them, dipping is the chief thing, and must be supported at all cost and hazards.

Many Baptist writers, in professedly quoting the Word of God, are in the habit of altering the language of our version, by rendering the verb '*Baptizo*,' by '*Immerse*,' without assigning any reason or apology for doing so—as if it were an unquestioned fact, that baptizing and dipping were necessarily and always identical in their action. Nor is it unusual with some of their preachers to display the like temerity, by substituting the word '*Immersion*' for the word '*Baptism*,' when reading or quoting the Scriptures in their ordinary pulpit and public administrations; as if none would question the propriety of such a meddling with the English Translation—thereby displaying, if not their actual ignorance of the real and varied import of the term, at least their anxiety, by any available measures, to prejudice the minds of their hearers, of every class and age, in favour of their own sectarian preconceptions of the mode of baptism.

On the other hand, it may be safely asserted, that if some Pedobaptists feel any serious difficulties in this question, it is concerning the proper *Subjects* of Baptism, rather than about the precise mode of its administration. That such doubts—excited chiefly, if not entirely, by the preaching, books, and tracts, of our Baptist bretheren—do really exist among some Pedobaptist Christians, cannot be questioned, and should create no surprise. It is principally to assist, in setting the minds of those persons right and at rest on this head, that I have undertaken the present essay, rather than as an attempt to persuade our earnest, ardent, and, especially, our ministerial opponents, to adopt our views and practice. Indeed, I should have been glad to have discussed this question without once alluding to our Baptist brethren, had it been practicable. But as they industriously pen, and obtrusively circulate, their objections to our principles and procedure, among our people, especially the poor and the young, as well as their own; I must, of necessity, reproduce their assertions and arguments, in order to refute them. I have, however, cautiously guarded against the inscription of even a single sentence which I considered fairly calculated to give the smallest offence to any persons who may differ from us on the topic under discussion. Still, it may be reasonably expected, that the parties who are so active and zealous in opposing Infant Baptism, will not be

easily offended at our conscientious and earnest labours in sustaining our own opinions and operations on this head.

X. Let it be clearly understood, that while defending Infant Baptism in this discourse, we as cordially believe in Adult Baptism, under certain circumstances, as any Antipedobaptist in the country. This fact is frequently overlooked, if not purposely denied, by our opponents. To hear many of them talk on this subject, one might imagine that we were directly and always opposing Adult or Believers' Baptism, under every possible contingency. They triumphantly refer us to the baptisms of the men and women named in the New Testament—insinuating, if not asserting, that we are directly and exclusively, setting our faces, tongues, and pens, against Adult Baptism. This is a grave mistake, or a culpable misrepresentation, of the real truth of the case. If persons, through the sinful neglect of their parents, or any other cause, have attained to the state of maturity, without having undergone this ceremony, and are desirous of becoming recognized disciples of Christ; we as readily baptize them as would the most devoted Antipedobaptist in the kingdom. It is hardly questionable, that Pedobaptist missionaries in heathen countries—whose position is very much like that of the first Christian evangelists—baptize full as many grown-up people as any equal number of prudent missionaries of Baptist denominations.

This declaration, I hope, will satisfy the candid reader, that our present argument relates not to Adult but only to Infant Baptism. And I will venture to assume, that, if our opponents will cease to oppose the administration of this rite to unbaptized children, the Pedobaptists will never assail them for doing the like to actually unbaptized adults. But if they continue to assert or insinuate, that it is antisciptural and sinful to baptize infants, or to advocate the practice especially among our own people; they will not deem the writer or his friends more uncharitable or presumptuous than themselves, if they openly avow their belief, that it is sinful to neglect it, and offensive to our divine Lord and Master to oppose this sacred service.

It may be here suggested, that it is only on the basis of mutual forbearance, respecting the Subjects and Modes of Baptism—the one party dipping adults, free of all personal molestation from us; and we affusing infants, without any annoyance from our opponents—that any extensive, cordial, and religious communion and co-operation can be long main-

tained among us. While, with a real and continuous forbearance on both sides, the two great Evangelical Calvinistic Communion of Congregational Dissenters might effectually coalesce; might, in many places, have one good self-sustaining interest, instead of two small struggling societies; and might carry on their cause with much more comfort and efficiency. But such forbearance must be mutual, sincere, and resolute. To this proposition, I verily believe, that few pious and intelligent Pedobaptists would feel any serious objection. Will our opponents equally acquiesce in it?

XI. Here I take leave to notice the sum and substance of all that has been and, consequently, of all that can be, advanced against Infant Baptism, on the assumed basis of Scripture evidence. Many simple people imagine there must be a vast fund of *biblical testimony* in opposition to this rite, or that it would not be so zealously and constantly opposed by so many good and great men as have spoken and written against it. This, however, is not the fact. Two negative scriptural arguments only are assigned for such antagonism.—Mr. Hall has stated them distinctly. The ‘Baptists allege the total ‘silence of Scripture, respecting the Baptism of Infants, together with their incompetence to comprehend the truths, or ‘sustain the engagements, which they conceive it designed to ‘exhibit.’ p. 11. All other objections, regarded as scriptural, originate in these, or are ramifications of them; or rather, they are brought against our methods of debate, or modes of illustration, than against the doctrine we advocate or the practice we adopt. To be a little more specific, they contend,

(1.) *That there is no direct, express, or positive proof of any infants having been actually baptized by John or the apostles of Christ.*—The irrelevancy and weakness of this negative argument have been fully exposed in the subsequent investigation. It may be here briefly remarked, that while the New Testament contains as many hints and intimations—more or less plain, as, under all circumstances, might have been expected—that tens of thousands of children were baptized by the primitive believers; there is not the slightest direct testimony afforded in it to support the contrary opinion. Not a word in prohibition of or discountenancing this service ever escapes the lips of our Lord or of any of his immediately accredited followers. And, as baptism had been administered to children in the Red Sea, and regularly, under other appellations, by the Hebrews, from that period to the time of John; the conclusion of our opponents must be viewed as

totally invalid. Our practice, on the other hand, it is presumed, has been placed on a foundation, which no argument, based simply on the lack of a plain example or a positive declaration, can for a moment disturb. The case of the communion of females at the Lord's Table, stands in a perfectly similar condition—it never being once expressly or indubitably affirmed or exemplified in the New Testament. It might as reasonably be objected, that no young men or young women should be baptized as that infants should not; since the Scriptures never command young men or women to be baptized, nor ever say such underwent this Christian ceremony. It is further affirmed,

(2.) *That such qualifications were required in Candidates for Baptism as no Children ever possessed.*—This, too, has been shown to be a most fallacious argument against Infant Baptism. That numerous adults were baptized by John and the apostles of Christ, is fully admitted. We believe in Adult Baptism equally with our opponents; and the necessity of it, on a large scale, at the first introduction of Christianity, to any place and at any time, no one ever doubted. We also believe, that in the case of adult candidates, certain prerequisites were necessary to induce them to be baptized, and to qualify them for it; and that these special antecedents were not, and are not found in children. But we also know, that the latter were circumcised without the personal preparations requisite in sinful adults. For aught the Scriptures aver to the contrary, children might always have been baptized without the prerequisites essential to proselyted men and women. Of one thing we are all certain, that a very different kind of meetness for entering the kingdom of glory is required for adults, from what is necessary in the case of dying infants. To the establishment of this doctrine we have given considerable attention in the subsequent inquiry.—The above objections positively include all the arguments that have ever been brought, as directly based on the Word of God, against baptizing children. That they have been ramified to an indefinite extent is manifest, from the hundreds of treatises written by our opponents against it, and as will appear in the present discussion. But nothing professedly founded on the silence or assertions of the Holy Scriptures, can be discovered in the writings of our intelligent opponents, against Infant Baptism, which the above two assertions do not entirely comprehend.

XII. If I am not greatly in error, the leading blunders our opponents make, while contending against Infant Baptism,



are chiefly founded upon a contracted, and all but a uniform, interpretation of certain leading terms employed in the New Testament, in relation to this service. According to them—*To baptize* is always and only to dip—the Greek verb, according to them, never meaning any thing less or besides. The noun, *Ecclesia*, translated church, comprehends only pious and regenerated men and women. The word *Disciple* excludes all but holy, grown up, and instructed followers of Christ. *Believers* always possess true and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The *Saints*, or the sanctified, are all spiritually regenerated and enlightened persons. The *Brethren* are all related to the Son of God by a new birth. *Converts* are all divinely changed in heart, as well as in their views and external deportment. *Christians* are all really and truly partakers of the mind and grace of Christ. The like high, spiritual, and limited senses are attached to other leading terms found in connexion with the gospel narratives and expositions of Christian Baptism. Let any one carefully peruse the books written against Baptizing Infants, and I think he will concede the verity of this allegation against our opponents. Hence, they consistently, though unrighteously, exclude all babies from a participation in this sacrament, and regard it as a vain and even a monstrous act, to baptize these little creatures, who do not believe, are not converted, cannot be viewed as Christians, or be fairly entitled to the designation of disciples and saints in heart and deed. But if such a special or contracted interpretation of the above, and of similar words, be not sustainable in every instance; if they have a higher and a lower, a larger and a lesser, import; if they are employed frequently in a different or in a general sense, as they unquestionably are, in common with most nouns and verbs in the Holy Writings; and if they may be so rendered, as fairly to accord with the affusion of infants, as they certainly may; then the chief current reasonings, resting on this ground, against our system and practice, will be found totally irrelevant.

XIII. Our brethren treat us with numerous lengthy and learned dissertations professedly directed against Infant Baptism. But, in reality, the major part of these effusions have nothing more to do with the point at issue *between us* than essays on the sabbath, the atonement, or the resurrection of the dead. We have long chapters and sections on baptismal regeneration, the employment of sponsors, the encouragement this ceremony is supposed to afford to national political establishments of Christianity, the ruin it brings on many

immortal souls, and so forth. The evils of the rite, as administered in the state and parish churches, are dwelt on most largely and eloquently; and the whole is set down to the charge of all who baptize infants, in whatever manner; and is manifestly designed to alarm the ignorant and the credulous, and to inspire a belief, that there is not and cannot be any Infant Baptism without such dreadful appendages; and that, consequently, it must be a most unrighteous and injurious ceremony, whoever administers it!

Yet, because certain sections of professing Christians combine these and other unscriptural notions with the rite in question, surely, it does not necessarily follow, as our opponents endeavour to make the world believe, that it cannot be administered without them! That it is performed without such appendages by all evangelical Nonconformists, these very writers must know as well as we do. To make them a part and parcel of treatises composed avowedly against Infant Baptism, however performed, is as unfair as to pronounce doctrinal heterodoxy to be an essential ingredient in all pulpit ministrations, or to assert, that superstitious observances are inseparable adjuncts of all divine worship. With these and similar irrelevant materials, their numerous and most popular works against Baptizing Children are abundantly supplied. It is probable that full eight-tenths of what is written professedly against this service, as actually administered by Wesleyan, Independent, and Presbyterian denominations, have neither directly nor indirectly any thing to do with the question as between Dissenting Pedobaptists and their opponents. Such a course of polemical warfare is manifestly unfair. Besides, it imposes an amount of labour on our party, to expose and refute such extraneous allegations, which a proper adherence to the actual merits of the question between us would wholly prevent.

XIV. In the following exposition and application of Paul's appeal to the church at Corinth, I have not inquired into the grounds of the *Perpetuity* of water Baptism, as held by most denominations of Christians. The validity and sufficiency of the current arguments in its favour have been taken for granted. The *Mode* of Baptism, as administered in the Red Sea, and afterwards by the Jews, by John the Baptist, and by the apostles of Christ, has received but concise and incidental attention in this discussion. Nor, has the question of the *post-apostolical* Testimonies in favour of Infant Baptism been much regarded in the subsequent treatise. Nor, as before

intimated, have I minutely examined, or largely exhibited the arguments in favour of our practice arising from *Circumcision*. This last especially has been done frequently by far more competent hands; and their reasonings, on this head, have yet to receive a fair and satisfactory reputation. The principles involved in that rite have afforded me many collateral arguments in repelling the attacks of opponents, and not a few illustrations in support of my general reasonings; and of these I have, of course, availed myself. There are also, as before observed, many *Passages* in the New Testament, fraught with ample materials adapted to sustain our practice, which have not been introduced as leading or fundamental arguments in the subjoined pages, but simply as auxiliary supports of our deductions, or rather for the purpose of meeting some of the numerous objections made to our doctrine and practice by our antagonists.

XV. A considerable portion of the following work has been occupied in stating the objections of the Baptists against baptizing children, or against the arguments and expositions by which it has been defended by various writers. These objections I have collected, arranged, and answered, to the best of my ability. I think the reader will find elsewhere few allegations against our doctrines and doings, on this head, worthy of the slightest consideration, or which are current among even the least intelligent of our opponents, that he will not see plainly stated and, I believe, fully and fairly refuted in the work itself. Indeed, it was this part of the discussion which swelled the present treatise to a size never intended when it was commenced. To render this part of the work as complete as possible, I have had to read numerous books and pamphlets, of former and recent dates, published on both sides of the controversy. By such a course, only, was I enabled to ascertain what the Baptist writers had advanced against our sentiments and practices; and also what answers Pedobaptists have given in their own defence. Of these materials I have made the best use in my power. I please myself with the idea, that both parties to this contention will see a full, true, and particular statement of what their best advocates have advanced in support and defence of their respective views and proceedings—with the exceptions previously mentioned. I have allowed our opponents to speak out fully for themselves. Their strongest statements, arguments, and objections have been copied without the smallest perversion or weakening of their import; and, in every important citation, the chapter and page of

my authorities have been appended. In the same way I have dealt with the writings of Pedobaptists—from whom I have copied largely—generally preferring to convey their own opinions in their own language, to giving them in my own. For making so large a use of their writings, I feel that an apology is due—especially to those still in the land of the living.

XVI. That we are often called upon to reiterate our expositions of Infant Baptism, and to defend ourselves while practising it, at much expense of time and labour, will not be denied by those who, with myself, believe it to be a scriptural, and, consequently, an innocent, and a useful institution. How we and this service are viewed and represented by certain out-spoken and zealous writers on the other side, may be seen in the body of this work. But as a good specimen of the notions held by many of these gentlemen, I will cite the language of Dr. Byron, in the most recent work, of any pretensions, published against Infant Baptism. In a list of Queries, meant for strong assertions, he asks, ‘Is not Infant Baptism an invention of men? Is it not the source whence the mass of carnal schemes have sprung? Is it not the sheet anchor of delusion that holds the whole mass in such system together? and, lastly, is it not the very foundation of all apostasy from the truths of the Gospel?’ *Title Page*. ‘I have also referred to the antisciptural idol of man’s invention, nicknamed Infant Baptism, which the great majority of the professing world worship under one delusive speculation or another; and which for ages has been the subtle masterpiece of the strong man armed to keep the carnal multitudes in a state of false peace under this insensible delusion.’ p. 3. ‘Is not Infant Baptism the root out of which all these tamperings with infinite uncertainties grow? How can this be? The reason is evident. When the set time came for God to deliver his dear people from that blasphemous system of iniquity and oppression (the mother of harlots,) he brought about in his providence that change or deliverance which men call the reformation.’ p. 78. Here, Infant Baptism is the root of all popish evils! ‘That masterpiece of carnal delusion, called Infant Baptism.’ p. 80. What deluded and dangerous wretches are the administrators and defenders of Infant Baptism! or, at least, they were so ten years ago, when Dr. Byron gave them a character, in his ‘Remarks on the Doctrine of Baptism!’ A renewed attempt to vindicate this rite, from such serious charges, cannot be an

uncalled-for effort. And till we have convinced our opponents, that they misunderstand the nature and tendencies of Infant Baptism, and have greatly under-estimated the evidence by which we sustain it, that concord and fraternizing, to which I have before alluded, will never be affected. In their present ignorance of our arguments, and with their lofty indignation, they might consistently, exclaim, 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?'

XVII. It may be expected, by some of my readers, that I should state more particularly the reasons which induced me to write the following work on the Subjects of Baptism. After so many able and excellent treatises have been published by much more learned and talented men, pertaining to Pedobaptist persuasions, and not a few of them of comparatively recent date, some explanation seems called for. Whether they will be deemed generally satisfactory or not, they are simply the following:—

(1.) The principal basis of my argument, in support and defence of Infant Baptism, is new in this controversy, at least, so far as my information extends. I do not mean, that I have formed a new idea of the passage quoted from the Corinthians, or of its relevancy to the subject under review; but, I believe, it is the first time, that it has been made the chief foundation of a treatise composed in support of the Baptism of Children. Citations will be found in the sequel, corroborating my view of the apostle's allusions; but the writers of them failed to pursue the inquiry, as done in the present work. And if my arguments are found to be valid, and the application of them proper, I feel I shall be justified in the present attempt.

(2.) The works which have been written more recently, by learned and earnest men, on both sides of this controversy, have elicited arguments and concessions which had not been so fully given before. This has been the case especially with the Baptist authors of mark in their own denomination. Whether any of the many damaging statements, and admissions, contained in their works, were made unconsciously of their importance in this debate, or were extorted from them by the pressure of their talented antagonists, or were the spontaneous declaration of convinced and candid minds, it is not for me to decide. But they are made; and, what is more, they are all sound and true. The result of the whole is, that the controversy has progressed materially towards a



crisis, such as it had not arrived at before. My object, then, has been to review the question in its present advanced condition, and to methodize and use the ample materials abler disputants have placed before me. This constitutes my second reason for publishing this treatise.

(3.) In reviewing the controversy, it appears to me that there were several points of weight and interest in the settlement of it, which had not been sufficiently explained and enforced, as they fairly required. Some of these, at first sight, seem but remotely relevant to the question; but, on a nearer and fuller examination, they manifestly involved much of the pith and marrow of the debate. I refer especially to the New Testament sense of the word *Ecclesia*, or Church, and the terms Believer, Disciple, Convert, Christian, and the like. On all these, I do not profess to have advanced any thing really novel; but I have given a prominence to them, which, I think, had not been done before. I have also stated and met a number of objections which, though current in conversation and the small and cheap publications of our opponents, do not often find a place in works of higher pretensions. These small arguments are almost the only ones small minds comprehend, and by them chiefly they are influenced. To answer them all was another reason for writing this volume.

(4.) The larger and most elaborate works, on our side of the question, appeared to me too learned and recondite for the mass of our readers. They are either above their reach, or their chain of reasoning is too long, to be comfortably and profitably followed by people little accustomed to protracted logical investigations. What I have aimed at has been to simplify the subject—to place it before the understanding in a form which might easily be comprehended, and yet still with a force of evidence that must be felt. This has been attempted, not simply by using great plainness of speech, but by dividing and subdividing the whole into Parts, Sections, and minor portions, distinctly headed and numbered. This gives a formality and apparent stiffness to the work. But, then, it enables the reader to pause in his course of perusal, and assists him to understand what is the particular topic immediately in discussion. Hence, to make a plain and readable book, on a dry controversial question, was another motive for composing the present volume. How far I have succeeded, is a question for others to decide. The attempt has cost more time and labour than most readers would imagine.

(5.) An additional inducement for undertaking the present work, was the request of many ministers and lay friends, that I would publish a small work on the *Subjects of Baptism*. Expressing their approval and high appreciation of my former essay on the *Mode of Baptism*, they have repeatedly solicited me to send out a treatise in defence of Infant Baptism. These appeals, from gentlemen resident in various parts of the country, of course, had considerable influence in determining me to make the attempt. A small work was first aimed at; but, to compress the full discussion into a very thin volume, I found impracticable. Hence, the publication as it now appears—the fruit of much labour, and the source of considerable pecuniary cost, before it reaches the eyes of the Christian public. I trust it will not disappoint the expectation of my friends; and will promote the purpose we all have in view—the defence of Infant Baptism. I have not the presumption to suppose, that all has been said that can be adduced in support of my object, or that many questions relative to it might not be asked, which are not here answered: But this I venture to assume, that every objection made against it, as far as I could discover it, has been fully and plainly stated, and as fully and plainly refuted. If I am mistaken, my opponents will readily show that I am in error, and in what it consists.

XVIII. The Rev. Robt. Hall has a few remarks on denominational prejudice, which merit universal and devout attention, and may be deemed appropriate in concluding these long introductory remarks. ‘Truth and error, as they are ‘essentially opposite in their nature, so the causes to which ‘they are indebted for their perpetuity and triumph, are not ‘less so. Whatever retards a spirit of inquiry is favorable to ‘error; whatever promotes it, to truth. But nothing, it will ‘be acknowledged, has a greater tendency to obstruct the ‘exercise of free inquiry, than the spirit and feeling of a party. ‘Let a doctrine, however erroneous, be a party distinction, ‘and it is at once entombed in interests and attachments ‘which make it extremely difficult for the most powerful ‘artillery of reason to dislodge it. It becomes a point of ‘honour in the leaders of such parties, which is from them ‘communicated to their followers, to defend and support ‘their respective peculiarities to the last; and, as a natural ‘consequence, to shut their ears against all the pleas and ‘remonstrances by which they are assailed. Even the wisest ‘and best of men are seldom aware how much they are

‘susceptible of this sort of influence; and while the offer of a world would be insufficient to engage them to recant a known truth, or to subscribe an acknowledged error, they are often in a willing captivity to prejudices and opinions which have no other support, and which, if they could lose sight of party feeling, they would almost instantly abandon,’ p. 105.

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The present work is intended to be a sequel to the Author’s treatise, entitled ‘MODERN IMMERSION NOT SCRIPTURE BAPTISM.’ This latter volume (of which the *second thousand* is on sale) has received the highest commendations from some of our leading Pedobaptist Reviews; and no formal answer to it has yet been published by any of our opponents.

These two works embrace a discussion of the entire questions at issue between the Pedo and the Anti-pedobaptist denominations of Evangelical Protestant Dissenters in this country.

In the volume on the *Mode of Baptism*, there are various statements, reasonings, and references, which bear equally on the inquiry into the proper *Subjects of Baptism*. Many of these have been purposely omitted in the latter volume, on account of the great length to which this discussion has necessarily extended; but may be readily seen by referring to the former treatise.

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The publication entitled ‘DIPPING NOT BAPTIZING,’ (of which about seven thousand have been sold) is a concise abridgment of *Modern Immersion, &c.*, and was designed for a more extended circulation than the larger work was likely to obtain.

## INFANT BAPTISM, ETC.

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*‘Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolators, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.’—1 COR. x. 1-14.*

IN order to defend the practice of Infant Baptism, by the declarations and reasonings of the Apostle Paul, contained in the above portion of Scripture, I shall prove three things:—*First*, That under the term, ‘Our Fathers,’ said to have been baptized in the cloud and in the sea, the writer really, necessarily, and intentionally included numerous Infants and Young Children; *Secondly*, That this Baptism of the Israelites unto Moses embraced all the essential principles and properties of Christian Baptism; and, *Thirdly*, That the practice of Infant Baptism, under the Gospel dispensation, may be fairly and

fully sustained from the Apostle's reasonings and reference to the Baptism of the Hebrews in the Red Sea.—The Objections likely to arise in the minds of open opponents, or of doubting adherents, against any of our leading statements and conclusions, I shall endeavour clearly to set forth, and fully to meet, as the discussion proceeds.—To commence with the first proposition,—

## PART FIRST.

UNDER THE TERM 'OUR FATHERS,' SAID TO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA, PAUL REALLY, NECESSARILY, AND INTENTIONALLY, INCLUDED NUMEROUS INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN.

This assumption is so manifest, on the mere announcement of it, that to many persons it may seem quite superfluous to adduce any evidence or arguments in its support. But as the establishment of the fact lies at the foundation of our ultimate theoretical and practical conclusions; and as it might be rashly denied by certain reckless opponents, if not plainly and indisputably sustained; I shall here prove that the words, 'Our Fathers,' certainly and unequivocally include infants and children, as well as men and women; and that the former were as truly and effectively baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as the latter.

SECTION FIRST.—*The term, 'Our Fathers,' is used for remote ancestors, or for national or ecclesiastical predecessors, and not in its confined and literal sense, for immediate adult male progenitors.*—This is manifestly and necessarily the case, as the circumstances of the Israelites when baptized fully testify. Such an application of these words is common in both the Old and New Testaments. In the former, the expression occurs about forty times; and in the latter, about twenty, and in every, or all but every, instance, it unequivocally conveys the idea of more or less remote ancestors, or predecessors; including alike and equally, men, women, and children. Dr. E. Williams says, 'What the Apostle principally refers to, is the fact, that 'all the Fathers, all the Israelites, *old and young*, as the visible 'church, were baptized, *i. e.*, by that solemn transaction separated from the idolatrous Egyptians, and initiated into a state 'of higher relative holiness than they were in before;—as well 'as the Christians; who were now growing too secure in their 'distinguished principles.' Mr. Stovel also says, 'Paul 'employs the example of the ancient *Jewish people*' [without



exception] 'at and after the passage of the Red Sea.'—*Reg. Lect.* iii. p. 34.

To render this import of the language plain and indisputable, I will cite a few passages wherein the words occur, and necessarily include men, women, and children. Neh. ix. 9: 'And 'didst see the affliction of Our Fathers in Egypt.' The women and children were afflicted as well as the men.—John vi. 31: 'Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert.' The women and children did so equally with the men.—1 Chron. xxix. 15: 'We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all 'Our Fathers.' The women and children were as much strangers and sojourners as the men.—Acts iii. 25: 'The 'covenant which God made with Our Fathers.' This covenant was made with all the men, women, and children together at Sinai, and renewed with them in a body afterwards.—Acts v. 3: 'The God of Our Fathers raised up Jesus.' He was no more the God of the men, than of the women and children.—Acts viii. 44: 'Our Fathers had the tabernacle of witness in 'the wilderness as he had appointed.' The women and children had this tabernacle as well as the men.—Acts xiii. 32: 'The promise which was made unto The Fathers,' including all the mothers and little ones, even all the tribes of Israel, which constituted 'the church in the wilderness,' comprehending old and young, the highest prince and the humblest peasant.—Heb. i. 1: 'God spake in time past unto The Fathers by the 'prophets.' He spake to all the Hebrews, without excepting any of the population on account of sex or age—all capable of understanding the truth.

These are sufficient specimens. Other passages occur, of course, in which women are evidently distinguished from men, and children from both. But the expression, 'Our Fathers,' signifies, in every instance, where some special exception is not made, and which is readily apparent, the ancient Hebrew people, of both sexes and of all ages, existing at some given period in their protracted history. Hence, we conclude, that in this designation of Paul—who was fully conversant with the Hebrew phraseology—children and infants were included, as really 'The Fathers' of the apostles and his brethren as any of the old men in the tribes of Israel, baptized in the cloud and in the sea. In this interpretation of these words, every commentator, of every creed, I have had an opportunity of consulting, fully and unhesitatingly concurs. Nor, I think, would any one arrive at a different conclusion, unless he had some sectarian purpose to serve. It should

not be overlooked, that in the above passage, Paul was also and equally addressing the Gentile part of the Corinthian congregation—probably the more numerous section of it. And he calls the ancient Hebrews, their Fathers equally as the fathers of their Hebrew fellow-worshippers. Now, it is obvious, that the people who passed through the Red Sea were not the natural lineal ancestors of those Greek converts. But they were their predecessors as worshippers of the God of Israel. And in this sense the expression must have been understood by them all.

The term, 'Our Fathers,' as employed in the text, is of much wider import than those expressions which refer to the heads, rulers, or representatives of the Hebrew nation, and of their respective tribes. These latter were recognized even in Egypt, before the exodus; and are frequently employed in the history of that favored people. Such heads and chiefs were occasionally summoned to meet Moses and Aaron, and were commanded to act separately from the rest of the population, as their representatives, leaders, and guides. An example or two may be given. While Moses was in Midian, keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, God commanded him to go into Egypt, 'and gather the elders of Israel together,' Ex. iii. 16. Before the institution of the Passover, 'Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, draw out and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover,' Ex. xii. 21; 'and the Lord said unto Moses, go on before the people, and take with thee the elders of Israel, and the rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go,' Ex. xvii. 5. 'And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God,' Ex. xviii. 12. There were also 'heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens,' Ex. xviii. 25. There were the captains or subordinate commanders of Israel, by which the people were marshalled, led, and directed out of Egypt, in order and according to their tribes. There were also princes of their tribes. But the titles of none of them convey the same idea as the expression—'Our Fathers'—in the passages previously cited; and which clearly embrace the entire population existing at some definite period in the history of the Hebrews.

The elders, as we have seen, were occasionally summoned, exclusively and apart from the people, to receive instruction and direction from Moses; and then to act as chiefs on behalf

of their socially subordinate brethren. But they were not summoned to be baptized for them; nor to receive an initiatory rite in their own persons for the multitudes of Israel; any more than Abraham was called to receive the sign and seal of circumcision for all his sons and male domestics; nor than the ancient priests were commanded to undergo personal purifications on behalf of others who might have been defiled in their camp. Neither should it be overlooked, that if, by the term 'Our Fathers,' Paul had meant to say, that the elders or male heads of the Hebrew families only were baptized unto Moses, it might have been very easily stated. Or, had it been the original intention of Jehovah to have baptized only the elders or male heads of the families of the Hebrews, there existed no more difficulty in calling them out from the rest of the people in Egypt for that purpose, than for any other; or than in afterwards collecting them in the wilderness, and there administering this ceremony to them alone. Had this been done and plainly recorded; it would have prevented all our assumptions, respecting the Baptism of the masses of men, women, and children in the sea. As the heads, elders, and princes were separately dealt with in other cases, so they might have been in this. But such was not the fact. When all the people were together; when they were all regarded and otherwise treated as one nation, or as one united body of persons, or even as one man; then and there God baptized them; as if purposely and expressly to assure us, that not the elders, nor the heads of families, nor the representatives of the people, only; but that the whole of them—old and young, male and female—were at once personally, individually, and alike, baptized unto Moses.

SECTION SECOND.—*The Children that passed through the sea must have been very numerous.*—The Hebrews who went out of Egypt, under the guidance of Moses, must have been an exceedingly great host. 'And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children,' Ex. xii. 37; and, though not mentioned, probably as many women of full age as there were men. It will hardly be questioned, that there were as many children under twelve years of age, as there were adults above twenty; for such is about the proportion of the young to the grown-up population of our own day. At all events, we may reasonably reckon a million of little ones traversing the sea with their parents and friends;

half of whom probably were carried in their mothers' arms. That these children were not left behind in Egypt is obvious, from the fact, that when Pharaoh was anxious to detain them as hostages, to ensure the return of the adults, after going into the wilderness to worship, and to offer sacrifices to Jehovah; Moses positively refused to depart on such conditions. 'And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters. And Pharaoh said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will not let you go with your little ones; look to it; for evil is before you.' But, subsequently, 'Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord . . . let your little ones also go with you.' Ex. x. 9, 10, 24: and the little ones went—hundreds of thousands of them, and were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, with their parents and friends. Probably a greater number of adults and children were present, and baptized on that one occasion, than were proselyted and baptized by the apostles of Christ during the entire period of their ministry.

It appears to me very likely, that Jehovah conducted the entire Hebrew nation through the sea, in their way to Sinai and the Holy Land, partly, at least, for the purpose of baptizing them to himself, or to purify them from the pollutions contracted in their state of bondage among the heathen; and thus symbolically setting them apart unto Moses as their teacher and king in Jeshurun. Afterwards we know, that people, of no rank, sex, or age, who had been heathens, or had resided awhile among heathens, could form any part of God's worshipping communion, without first being washed, or undergoing the rite of baptism. To effect this grand national purification of the Hebrews, and at the same time, to punish their oppressors and his own enemies, the Almighty led them through the sea, instead of leading them in the ordinary route by land. As the cloud was a light to Israel and a blind to the Egyptians, so the sea was rendered a purifying element to the people of God, and one of destruction to their oppressors. By one act God, in his wisdom, frequently accomplishes the most opposite results.

Let it be borne in mind, that these vast numbers of children and infants baptized in the sea, were not present by accident, but through a divine and previous arrangement and direction. A mixed multitude of the Egyptians were in the train or company of the Hebrews, possibly from personal attachment to old friends, or through a hope of escaping any future plagues that might befall their native country, or through a conversion to the religion of the Israelites, and a desire to obtain a share

of the blessings which were apparently in store for God's chosen people. But unless previous proselytes to Hebrewism, they were present by accident, and shared in the baptismal rite apparently by chance. But the little Israelites formed an essential part of the nation, whose entire deliverance God had determined to effect; for whose emancipation he had wrought so many wonders in the land of Ham; and who were then to be manifestly taken under his special protection and guidance. When Pharaoh was disposed to let the adults go to worship God in the way to Canaan, but proposed to retain the 'little ones,' Moses replied, that they wished to hold a feast unto the Lord, and that their sons and their daughters *must be present* to participate in the solemnity—intimating that the service would be incomplete without them. Ex. x. 9, 10.

Jehovah evidently felt and displayed as deep an interest in the unhappy condition of the infant Israelites, as of the adults; was as intent on their liberation as on that of their seniors; and was equally prepared to set them apart unto Moses, as the greatest and holiest of their elders. Indeed, all things considered, from the prominent part those children were to play in after years, and the honours many of them were to win and to wear under Joshua, in conquering the land of Canaan—compared with the misconduct, disgrace, and death, of most of their seniors in the desert—they were certainly the most important and interesting portion of the Jewish nation—at least, in God's sight, which reached forward to the entire course and conduct of every one of them. Here, then, we again note, we have a million of children purposely included in the great gathering of the people in the Red Sea, in order to be baptized unto Moses—or rather to his divine Master.

Should it be said, that if the fact of the children being present with their fathers in the sea, during this great baptizing, necessitated their baptism also; then all the cattle and goods pertaining to the Hebrew people present, must also have been baptized. This does not certainly follow. Dogs and hogs might be in the river or pool in which an opponent is dipping his converts; but that does not prove that he must baptize them also. A person baptized in his clothes may be formally consecrated to the Lord, while our brethren would not aver that they had baptized the white cloaks and black gowns of the subjects. Still, that mere material or inanimate things might be baptized we all know, from the fact, that cups and pots, brassen vessels and tables, underwent such a ceremony. We learn also, that the tabernacle and temple and their utensils



were sprinkled, consecrated, and purified. Mr. Carson says, 'The baptisms under the law were for ceremonial purifications.' p. 349. It therefore follows, that all ceremonial purifications, even of inanimate objects, were real baptisms. The baptism of human beings, however, was to a higher destiny. Those consecrated to *Moses*, according to Mr. Stovel, 'were called to glorify the God of their fathers either in the blessedness which resulted from obedience, or in the punishment which was due to their rebellion.' The people, according to Paul, were baptized unto *Moses* as their leader, teacher, and lord. Of such a purpose, human beings only were capable. And the elements of this capacity all human beings possess. However, if our opponents think that the cattle were baptized as well as the women and children, we shall have no dispute with them on that point. What we contend for is, that the latter were really, intentionally, and divinely dedicated to God in this rite. Nor would the fact be altered if every dog, camel, or ass, belonging to the emancipated Israelites and their followers were baptized also.

Mr. Owen having said, 'The children were baptized with their parents, with the baptism of *Moses*,—were baptized unto *Moses* in the sea and in the cloud;' Mr. Keach replied, 'To which I answer, so were many *wicked men* also; all the Israelites were not godly persons, but many of them were profane and ungodly persons. Besides, there was a mixed people passed through the sea with the fathers also, and others of other nations and much cattle also; and these were all baptized as much as the little children,' [and as the old men also.] 'May we baptize such therefore? We have as much ground from hence to baptize such, as you have to baptize your babies, nay, more ground, if the rain falling upon the Israelites was that which baptized them; 'tis a question whether any rain might fall on the little babies, if it fell on their parents; for the parents might cover them, by holding something over their heads and bodies.' p. 165. But, as all the Fathers hardly walked naked and bare-headed through the sea, being doubtless just as well protected from the rain as many of the little ones; it would follow, that Mr. Keach's reasons for the non-baptism of the infants, in their mother's arms, to say nothing of the children walking by their parents' side, hold equally valid against the Baptism of many of the fathers themselves! But Paul says, they were all baptized. Then, as to 'the many wicked men,' the unregenerated Hebrews, and 'the profane and ungodly persons

‘present.’ That they were baptized, our author seems not to question; but assumes that this was no rule respecting the proper Subjects of Baptism under the Gospel. But Paul says it was. His doctrine evidently is, that all persons now in a position and relationship analogous to that of the Hebrews, when entering into a new ecclesiastical state, preparatory to the reception of divine instruction and discipline, to qualify them for future obedience and happiness, may and should be baptized unto Christ, as the Israelites were unto Moses. With regard to ‘the mixed people, and others of other nations,’ who are admitted to have been baptized with the natural-born Israelites; it is singular we never expressly read of them afterward, as religiously distinct from the Hebrews themselves. Nor do we hear of their returning back to their own country again. The inference is, that they were baptized as proselytes to the true God, and became incorporated and identified with his ancient people, subject to the same laws and entitled to the like privileges. And may not proselytism to Judaism, and proselytism, by water baptism, recognized by all the Rabbis, and by our leading opponents in this controversy also, find its origin in this great Baptizing act of Jehovah in the Red Sea? And, further, as these mixed people would bring their wives and children with them in their flight out of Egypt, and as the latter would necessarily be baptized like their husbands and fathers; we readily discover how it was, that subsequent proselytes to God’s religion brought their children with them, and subjected them to the same ceremonial introductions as themselves. This circumstance is worthy of consideration in examining this great question. In a word, if the apostle does not mean, that people similar to the multitude, baptized in the sea, might be baptized in Corinth, whatever be their character, sex, or age, his allusion is without consistency, and his object without a definite discoverable aim; and could be of no utility in establishing the faith, and directing the minds, of his Corinthian readers.

SECTION THIRD.—*All the children that passed through the sea, with their parents, were really, intentionally, and scripturally baptized.*—It is unquestionable, that the little ones were placed in precisely the same position, in respect of the baptizing act and element, as their fathers and mothers. Consequently, what was done to the sires was done to their sons; while the women and their female offspring shared in this rite precisely alike. By this one baptismal covenant act,

the whole congregation was bound and benefitted in exactly the same mode and degree. The children could not have passed on far in advance of their parents, and most of them could not have travelled even a yard before them. It is plain, too, they were not left behind, at any appreciable distance, during their whole passage through the deep. Therefore, no baptizing of their fathers and mothers or other adult friends could have taken place without baptizing them also, and at the same moment. The application of the baptizing element to the men and women, and not to the children in their arms, or 'on their shoulders,' or by their side, would have required a miraculous discrimination and an arrangement equal to the power which divided the sea, saved the Hebrews, and brought destruction upon Pharaoh and his host. But no such miraculous separation or discrimination, on this great baptizing occasion, is noticed. The reverse is affirmed. The entire body of the 'Jewish people' is mentioned, as being acted upon, and covenanted with, in the like manner, and at the same time.

In further illustration, remark, that when the sun shone upon the parents, its rays fell equally on their families. When the pillar of fire gave light to the adults, it also gave light to the children and little ones. When 'the clouds poured out water, and the skies sent out a sound,' all the congregation was equally aspersed, cooled, and refreshed, with the baptismal element, and cheered with the awful, yet encouraging, voice of heaven. Paul says nothing as to the intention of the Almighty to baptize only a portion of the Hebrews; nor does he affirm, that only a part of them underwent the ceremony. They were all alike dedicated to Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. If any doubt our doctrine, let them adduce the grounds of their misgivings. If any deny it, let them support their objections. Mr. Keach virtually admits it, though with manifest reluctance. The only person among our opponents who contends for the contrary notion, is Mr. Rees, whose remarks will be noticed shortly. In fact, till the construction we have put on the language of the apostle be clearly shown to be erroneous, we shall conclude it to be fully proved that, at the lowest calculation, a million of children and infants were really, effectually, and designedly baptized unto Moses by God himself, in the Red Sea. There is no stronger proof that children were drowned in the general deluge, which destroyed, with the exception of one family, the entire population of the whole earth, than that all the Hebrew infants, who came out of Egypt, were baptized in the Red Sea. The evidence of both

facts is of the like description: while the terms employed, and the circumstances narrated, warrant and necessitate this conclusion

Should the question be proposed, as it possibly might be, whether it was essential to the entire and universal baptism of the Hebrew nation, that the baptizing element, whether from the clouds above, or from the spray of the waters around, should come into personal contact with every man, woman, and child in the Red Sea? I reply, we have no evidence showing that they were not all and individually sprinkled by the purifying element, or that any difficulty obstructed Jehovah's effecting it. But, still, this was not ceremonially necessary for the realization of Paul's declaration, that 'all our fathers were baptized.' In their congregated capacity, the Hebrews are often spoken of as a body, a person, a son, a daughter, a child; and in this united capacity they were generally regarded and dealt with by their divine Master. If the baptizing element actually reached any part of this national body, it would be the actual baptizing of every member of it. What is done to an army, a *пock*, or a family, though physically or sensibly affecting only a part, is reckoned as if done to every individual in it. 'Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body.' 1 Cor. xii. 12, 26.

In this united capacity the Israelites were treated and contemplated during the entire existence of the Hebrew commonwealth, and especially in their Levitical ceremonies. 'Moses took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,' Heb. ix. 19; that is, some of them for all, a part of the body for the entire members. In accordance with this arrangement, we read of Moses, 'sprinkling with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry,' Heb. ix. 21; not every board, socket, and ring in the tabernacle, nor every vessel, all over; but parts for the whole. In like manner, the priests or clean persons applied the purifying element, in the form of sprinkling a few drops on the unclean; but never in the manner of wetting them entirely, or in the shape of an immersion. This may not seem so plenary, imposing, or effectual, an act of cleansing or consecrating, as wetting or washing the body all over. But it was God's plan, and, therefore, perfect, and is our only guide in similar

cases. Possibly the partial application, or the limited amount, of the typical element employed in purifying multitudes of individuals, is designed to teach us, that such is the saving virtue of the Redeemer's blood, that a few drops can take away sin, and that a very small measure of the influence of the Holy Spirit can sanctify unholy souls.

Take a further exposition from other actions about the same time as the Baptism in the sea. When, a little previously, 'Aaron smote' [a small portion of] 'the waters that were in 'the river,' the result was universal, or as if he had smitten every drop of every stream in the land; for all the waters were affected alike, and became blood. By a similar limited action, all the waters of Egypt became swarming with frogs which issued forth all over the country. Again, 'Aaron 'smote' [a little] 'dust of the earth, and all the dust of 'the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.' Here you see a partial act producing a universal effect; the application of Aaron's rod to a portion of the elements operating upon every drop and atom, as though all of them had been brought into intimate contact with the wonder-working staff of God's high priest. John the Baptist, in all probability, baptized the people *en masse*, as a multitude, a congregation, or as a body, gathered around him. This every preceding minister under the law would have done; and he knew of no other method, in similar circumstances. Nor can one fairly account for John's baptizing such vast and 'prodigious multitudes' in so short a time—about six months—on any other plan. The immersion of every one of them personally, as a separate act, was perfectly out of the question.

The deduction from these illustrations is apparent, that if only some of the Hebrew men, women, and children, received the baptizing element, all of them were virtually and, to all intents and purposes, individually baptized. That all the men were baptized, will be universally admitted; and that all the women were equally baptized, will also be conceded. But the objection as applied to the children, would apply to their fathers and mothers equally. Some of the latter only were as likely to have escaped a contact with the baptizing element as the former, being equally exposed to its non-application. In fact, if they were baptized by the rain of heaven, as our opponents presume they were; to have escaped the personal application of it, would have been ten times more difficult than to have received it. All were alike exposed to the descending element. None in the open channel of the sea, and in their marching



order, could have had more shelter than another. Indeed, Paul says, they were *all* baptized. But, even had the case been, as the objection supposes, the consecration of every soul would have been as perfect, as though all had been personally purified. There would be nothing like what might be termed, a baptism by proxy, where one would be baptized for another; and yet, had such been the case, it would not sustain the cause of the objectors to Infant Baptism, as the children were virtually baptized, as truly as the adults; and our opponents never baptize substitutes instead of principles, nor parents for their adult offspring. These observations constitute a reply to Mr. Keach's supposition that the mothers might have prevented their 'little babies' from being baptized, 'by holding something over their heads and bodies!'

SECTION FOURTH.—*All the Israelites who ate of the manna and drank of the water from the rock, were certainly baptized in the sea,*—provided they were born at the time of this national exodus. 'And did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' In Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians, he informs them, that all the Hebrews had been baptized in the cloud and in the sea, the pious and the profane, the subsequent worshippers of the golden calf, fornicators, murmurers, and sinners against Christ; and that all of them had, in common, eaten of the bread and drank of the water which God had miraculously provided for them. In neither case does he make the least exception of character, sex, or age. That all of them were thus fed, we know from the sacred narrative; and we are assured, that all who were thus fed were also baptized. The eating, drinking, and baptizing, in respect of the emancipated Hebrews, were equally extensive; nor is an exception of the infants made, or even practicable. Nor was it necessary on account of the nature of the food God supplied, any more than it was necessary because of the nature and mode of the baptism he adopted. The manna and water were as suitable for the sustenance of the children 'weaned from the breast,' as for the men and women. On it they lived, till they were forty years of age, and safely located in the fertile land of Canaan. There was not a babe carried through the sea, who was not capable of receiving and digesting this bread from Heaven—this angels' food—and of drinking of this living water, soon after they were provided for these travellers in the

wilderness—about six weeks after their baptism in the sea. In a word, Paul evidently means, that all the Israelites, old and young, were fed with the manna, and refreshed with the water of the rock. The history of this singularly supported people proves his assertion to be true. They had nothing else for their regular support during their long and painful wanderings in the desert. The inference is, that as all who first ate the manna, and drank the water, were baptized in the sea; so the whole of the Hebrew tribes, who came out of Egypt, and were sustained in this gracious and wonderful manner, were, without exception, personally and purposely, consecrated or disciplined unto Moses by their Heavenly Deliverer.

In truth, an objector might as reasonably aver, that the literal Fathers of the Hebrew families in the wilderness were the only persons who ate of the manna and drank of the rock, because they alone are expressly named; as that the same Fathers only were baptized; since they alone are specifically mentioned. The same persons who lived on God's provision, underwent God's baptism. We might as justly deny, that the children were not fed with the manna and water, as deny that they were not consecrated to God in the sea. Or we might charge the inspired apostle with employing a style of speech, for the information of the Corinthians, grossly inconsistent, and every way calculated to perplex and mislead his readers—making the term 'Our Fathers' to signify only the heads of families, and every man, woman, and child, at the same time, and in the same sentence!

It may not be out of place to notice, that when Paul refers the Corinthians to the manna and water in the wilderness, it is not stated what gracious privileges they themselves possessed, corresponding with those their ancestors had enjoyed under Moses. Nor is a solution of the case material to our argument. It may, however, be remarked, that if the sacred writer had any particular Christian means in his mind, they must have been such as were adapted to both sexes and to all ages, capable of receiving them; since the manna and water were partaken of by all the Hebrews in their journey through the desert. Any privileges, adapted only to a certain class or age, would not have corresponded with the universally administered and appropriated food and drink in the wilderness. Religious teaching or training is the only ordinance and blessing thus communicated indiscriminately to the Corinthian and other congregations. That Paul referred to this kind of privilege, is rendered the more probable from the fact, that he compares

religious instruction to human sustenance in this very epistle. 'I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able; for are ye not yet carnal? for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions.' chap. iii. 23. The like idea and comparison are suggested in his epistle to the Hebrews, where hearing, and eating and drinking, are mentioned as analogous operations. chap. v. 12-14.

Observe further, the apostle places the typical religious significance of baptism in the sea, and eating the manna and drinking the water from the rock, upon an equality. The manna was from heaven, and the water was from Christ, and both were of a spiritual import; the one angels' food, and the other living water, or the water of life. The language is highly descriptive of the best of religious privileges. Baptism was a dedication to God and good things; the manna and water were the blessings obtained in consequence of it. Those who partook of the one partook of the other. It is also seen, that not only children but unconverted and ungodly men partook of both. And the deduction is, that similar people, under the gospel, might partake of both also. If unrenewed people were proper subjects for eating the manna and drinking the water, they were equally so for water baptism or purification. And if now unconverted people may enjoy the means of religious instruction, they may surely enjoy the preliminary rite which inducts to it. Both acts were typical, one of mental purification, the other of mental edification—of consecration to the cause of God, and being trained up in it—of the influence of the Spirit, and of feeding on the provisions made for the soul, through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

SECTION FIFTH.—*God subsequently treated the entire Hebrew nation as if they had all been consecrated to himself by Baptism.*—This fact plainly proves, that they were all brought into the same covenant relationship, and placed under the like personal obligations; for otherwise his dealings with them would have been materially different—as was apparent in respect of themselves and the unconsecrated Gentiles. We never read of Israelitish females being without the pale of the divine protection and its special benevolence; although it is not recorded, that they were consecrated unto Moses in the sea, in common with their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Nor were they, when transgressing, exempted from the punishments inflicted on adult offenders, on the ground that

they had broken no baptismal covenant. The like may also be affirmed respecting the infants and children. They enjoyed all the covenanted blessings of the baptized equally with their seniors, till any of them sinned and involved themselves in the evils incurred by violating their initiatory obligations to love and serve God, as some of them ultimately did. The case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and, of the two latter, 'their wives and their sons and their little children,' is strikingly to the point. Num. xvi. 17, 30. So in all the national, social, and family blessings of the Hebrews, as well as in the plagues, famines and disastrous wars, old and young were benefitted or chastened in common. The fact is too manifest and indisputable to need confirmation. The treatment which the women and children met with during the personal administration of Moses fully evince that, equally with the men, they were included in what Mr. Stovel designates the 'Covenant' of the Red Sea. That the obligations and blessings of this covenant were great and numerous, the punishments inflicted on those who wilfully violated its claims, render unquestionable.

Mr. Noel's views accord with those of Mr. Stovel—to be more fully cited in the sequel—and show that infants may be included in a covenant equally with their parents, and that unholy persons may be bound by it, the same as the righteous. 'This covenant was made with the whole nation. God required Israel to obey him, and if they revolted against him, they would be condemned and punished; but they would be punished as a covenanted people. The covenant required them to be holy; but it was made with them all, holy or unholy, as the children of Abraham. When holy, they kept the covenant, and were blessed. When unholy, they broke his covenant, and were punished; but holy or unholy, they were within the covenant.' *Subj.* p. 150. Mr. Keach also says, 'God called the house of Israel holy, because he separated them to himself, both parents and children, in a legal church state, whether the parents were believers, or faithful persons, or real saints, or not.' p. 114. How God visibly separated the whole house of Israel to himself, if not by circumcision and baptism, our opponents will have the goodness to inform us. It is also admitted, that unholy people and children may be members of God's church—call it legal, if you please; but God had a church of old, and such persons were in it—or, more correctly, they were in God's *Ecclesia* or Congregation of consecrated Hebrews—as they were in the first age of the gospel dispensation.

I may here advert to a statement made by Mr. Rees in reply to Mr. Walker. The latter having briefly advocated the application of Paul's allusion to the baptism in the sea, in accordance with the views I have previously advocated; the former makes the following rejoinder. As this contains the only open and explicit denial of the fact, that the children were baptized unto Moses with their parents, I shall give his argument at large. He says, Mr. Walker 'lays the whole stress upon the apostles making the infants to be the Fathers spoken of here. (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) Whereas there is no ground to believe that St. Paul had any infants in his intention. For he applies his idea, if we may judge from his words, to fathers and heads of families passing through the sea; and there is no notice taken of infants in the least. And the following context makes it necessary to understand the apostle as speaking of fathers, heads of families, and adult persons. For there are actions ascribed to them which are utterly inconsistent with infancy, and denote them to be adult persons when they came out of Egypt. As particularly their lusting and murmuring in a sinful manner against God and his providence. Compare the passage with Ex. xvi. 1, 2, 3. "And all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departure out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said unto them, would to God that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full." And in the 17 chap. v. 3. "The people murmured against Moses, and said, wherefore is this that thou has brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children, &c." Mr. W. would have us believe that these were the infants who, but a few weeks before, were in their parents' arms in the Red Sea; whereas the text says, they had long before sat down by the flesh-pots in Egypt, and even that they had children of their own.' p. 81, 82.

That this representation of Mr. Rees is destitute of the least validity against the views of Mr. Walker, I think the preceding remarks have rendered manifest. And did not the above quotation contain the only specious argument I have met with, at variance with the conclusion drawn from the language of Paul; and were it not certain, that the opponents of Infant Baptism are ever ready to avail themselves of the slightest



excuse for their hostility to it, the whole might be passed over in silence. Let it be noted, that the entire force of Mr. Rees' argument rests on the meaning he puts on the words, 'The whole congregation,' (Ex. xvi. 2), as if there it necessarily included every individual in the congregation of Israel—men, women, and children. If it does not, in all connexions and under all conditions, comprehend every person of every age, his inferences will be found to be gratuitous and invalid. The terms 'Children of Israel,' and 'The People,' are confessedly indefinite, admitting almost any number of exceptions among the murmurers in the wilderness. When it is said 'The whole congregation came into the wilderness of Sin,' we must understand it as comprehending the entire people. This we gather from the connexion in which the language is found. But when it is said 'The whole congregation murmured,' we know that only a part of the people are intended by this expression; for the connexion assures us, that only a part of even the adults complained of Moses and Aaron; and that the children were guiltless in this case, not only reason, but also inspiration assures us. 'With *many* of them God 'was not well pleased... Neither murmur as some of them 'murmured.' It is, therefore, certain that every one in the congregation did not; and that Moses did not mean to tell us they did—he using the expression in a limited sense.

That the sacred historian meant, that only a part of the people rebelled and murmured, we learn from his own words. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you; your carcases shall fall in the wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said, should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in the wilderness.' Num. xiv. 26-32. Here the divine speaker fully explains the import of the expressions, 'this evil congregation—the children of Israel—and the whole congregation;' and clearly shows, that the little ones were not included in them, when alluding to the sins and murmurings of the people. On this point there can be no mistake. But can this be said of the language of the

apostle, or is there any subsequent expression to indicate that by the words, 'Our Fathers,' the entire people, of both sexes and of all ages, were not intended: or was there any circumstance connected with the baptism in the sea, that admitted or necessitated the exception of the children, or of any who were passing through it?

That the whole Hebrew nation, without exception, went through the sea, and were baptized in it, we learn, not so much from the term—'All Our Fathers'—employed by the Apostle, as from the fact, that they were all personally, purposely, and individually, present and together, when this baptism was administered. Every person, young and old, was capable of being affused or sprinkled with the baptizing element. There was no more moral or natural difficulty in the case of any one of them, than in the rest. But in the instance of the murmuring, there were both. The obedient adults would not murmur, and the little ones could not. In this reasonable sense God's word is to be interpreted. When it is said, 'The children of Israel *walked* upon dry land in the midst of the sea;' Ex. xiv. 29; we know that infants and young children did not literally travel on foot on the occasion, because they were unable. But when it is added, 'The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians,' v. 30; we are certain that the children were meant as well as their parents. Many illustrations might be given. 'The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.' Jonah, iii. 5. In this case adults only were meant. But when it is said, 'God spared Nineveh, that great city, wherein were more than six-score thousand persons that could not discern between the right hand and the left,' ch. iv. 11: it is unquestionable, that infants were included among the people of Nineveh. Mr. Keach, who admits, that all the children that passed through the sea were baptized, as we have previously seen, says, 'I have shown that, according to scripture rhetoric, frequently by a synecdoche, a part is put for the whole, and sometimes a far lesser part also.' p. 186.

In the words of the apostle, 'The Fathers,' who were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, are said to have eaten the manna and drank of the water from the rock; now Mr. Rees might, with equal consistency, have argued, that the then existing 'fathers, heads of families, and adult persons,' only participated in these provisions. He might have reasoned, 'there is no more ground for believing that Paul had any

'infants in his intention,' when speaking of the food in the wilderness than when referring to the purification in the sea. 'For he applies his ideas, if we may judge, from his words, 'to fathers and heads of families . . . . There are actions ascribed 'to them which are utterly inconsistent with infancy, and 'denote them to be adult persons, when they came out of 'Egypt, as particularly their lusting and murmuring in a 'sinful manner against God and his providence, &c.' Wherefore, we are to conclude 'That, because the whole congregation 'murmured against Moses and Aaron, and wished to return to 'the flesh-pots of Egypt, the apostle could not have included 'infants and children in the expression, "Our Fathers," when 'speaking of their partaking of the bread and water mercifully 'provided for all the people. If the term "Our Fathers" 'did not include the children among the murmurers in the 'whole congregation; it could not include them among the 'whole congregation that ate of the manna and drank of the 'water of the rock.' But, the persons who partook of this sustenance were identical with those who were baptized; and as all were fed, so all were purified—and are designated 'All our Fathers,' by the apostle in the very same verse of his epistle—and he had them as much in his mind when referring to them in the sea, as when feeding on the food of heaven. Thus much for Mr. Rees' reasoning on this point. The fallacy of his conclusion is apparent. In truth he appears to have no great confidence in it himself; for instead of asserting, that children were not baptized in the Red Sea, he merely insinuates they were not, offering the suggestion in support of his notion rather with the hope of satisfying superficial observers, than of convincing such as were likely to examine its validity.

SECTION SIXTH.—*Children usually, if not always, constituted an essential portion of the religious conventions of the Hebrews.*—This fact forms a strong presumptive evidence in favour of our doctrine, that infants were really and intentionally comprehended in the term, 'Our Fathers,' said to have been baptized in the Red Sea. It is not probable that their presence would have been required in these religious gatherings, or that they would have been made parties to the important affairs transacted in them, had they not been comprehended in the preceding national baptism, or the ceremonial act of a national consecration to God. They were equally interested in this initiatory rite as in the subsequent religious

assemblies; and they were as capable of being baptized as of being made parties to the covenants which God afterwards established with his chosen people. These congregations were for the purpose of hearing the divine commands, as at Sinai, or to renew their covenant vows, as when, at length, they stood near the Jordan. That little children were present, and as far as practicable, participated in these solemn transactions, and thereby became bound to obedience in coming years, as much as the adult members of these vast conventions, may be fully evinced by a few citations from the sacred narrative.

'Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God; 'your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, 'with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and 'the stranger' [or proselyte] 'that is in the camp, from the 'hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water, that thou 'shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God.' Deut. xxix. 10, 11. 'Gather the people together, men, women, 'and *children*, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that 'they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord thy 'God, and observe to do all the words of this law.' Deut. xxxi. 12. 'There was not a word that Moses commanded, which Joshua 'did not read before all the congregation of Israel, with the 'women and *little ones*, and the strangers that were conversant 'among them.' Joshua viii. 35. In the days of Jehoshaphat, when the divine protection was to be publicly implored against the power of Moab and Ammon, 'All Judah stood before the 'Lord, with their wives and their *children*.' 2 Chron. xx. 13. 'And when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, 'weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, 'there assembled unto him out of Israel, a very great congregation, of men, and women, and *children*, for the people wept 'very sore.' Ezra x. 1. Thus the children, being present, most probably in all the great religious assemblies of the Israelites, and being often expressly mentioned; we may reasonably infer, that they were regarded as an integral and essential part of 'the church in the wilderness;' equally with their fathers and mothers—were entitled to participate in all the general benedictions and benefactions conferred on God's chosen seed; and became subject to the laws and regulations by which their seniors were to be ruled and governed. Hence, we further infer, that they were not only present with their parents in the Red Sea, but were also and equally baptized or disciplined with them unto Moses.

Not only were the children of the Hebrews summoned to

form a part of the great religious congregations of the people, but they always constituted an integral portion of them. As far as they were capable, they were subject to all the distinguishing Mosaic laws and ordinances. That they were liable to ceremonial pollutions, no one will question. It is nowhere said they were exempted from such uncleanness, till they had arrived at a certain advanced age, or till, what we call, the time of manhood. With the utmost parental care, few young ones would pass a very long period without requiring some ritual sanctification. 'In the Mosaic laws, those persons 'were termed *unclean* whom others were obliged to avoid 'touching, or even meeting, unless they chose to be themselves 'defiled; that is, cut off from all intercourse with their brethren; 'and who besides were bound to abstain from frequenting the 'places where divine service, and the offering feasts were held, 'under penalties still more severe.'—*Horne*, Intro. pt. 3, bk. 4, chap. 5. 'Eleven different species of impurity are 'enumerated in the Levitical law, to which the later Jews added 'many others.'—*Ib.* One may readily conceive, how frequently the volatile little folks would subject themselves to such a defilement, and how often they must have been the subjects of ritual purification. If we suppose, that in the wilderness, and in the Holy Land, not a single day passed without such a ceremony being performed on a dozen little people, we shall surely not be charged with exaggeration—though from the giving of the law till the time of John, not a single instance is recorded, in which a child is said to have been polluted, or been subject to a formal ritual cleansing on account of it. Indeed, it must have been a matter of such ordinary occurrence and have excited such little notice, as never to have induced a record in the annals of the nation. This assumption is corroborated by the fact, that the account of individual purification of persons of riper age, though necessarily of daily and even hourly occurrence, is scarcely ever mentioned, from the promulgation of the law, till the end of the Hebrew polity, a period of fifteen hundred years. And had the Jewish theocracy continued to this day, with all its ceremonial laws and operations still in force; it is highly probable, that washing for uncleanness, or for proselytism, in the ordinary way, would have found no place in the written accounts, or the general history of that people. Like eating, drinking, and dressing, it would have been too common for especial record—save under some extraordinary circumstances.

Here, by the way, it is worthy of notice, that intimations



are not wanting, in the New Testament narratives, warranting the conclusion, that in the days of John, of Christ, and of his apostles, parents were also accustomed to take their children with them, whenever practicable, to religious meetings, especially to all the large gatherings of the people for the service or worship of God; or to obtain instruction and divers blessings from his inspired and appointed servants. A multitude of Jews, out of different cities, followed Christ on foot, into a desert place, and remained with him till the evening; when, out of compassion, he miraculously fed them all with five loaves and two fishes. 'And they that had eaten were about five thousand, besides women and *children*.' Matt. xiv. 15-21. On another occasion, the multitude continued in attendance on the ministry of Christ three days. These he fed with seven loaves and a few fishes; 'and they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and *children*.' Matt. xv. 32-38. We, therefore, conclude, that when all the 'inhabitants of Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,' repaired to the preaching of John the Baptist, and probably remained with him several days successively, they took their children with them, and had them baptized by the forerunner of the Messiah, as their infant ancestors had been in the Red Sea. The baptizing spot on the Jordan is about fifteen miles from Jerusalem—a full day's journey for good travellers on foot in that country, and more for the aged and infirm—even if unencumbered with children and provisions. Such as came from more distant parts must have been much longer on the road. Three or four days would be the least time that could have been occupied by a visit to the Baptist for instruction and baptism. If we set down a week as their average absence from home, we shall probably approach near to the truth. That the parents, and especially those of the poorer classes, left their little infant children at home all this time, is very improbable.

When the people brought young children to Christ that he should touch or put his hand on them and pray; (Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13), we read in this act indications of a prior habit of pious parents, who were accustomed to take their little ones to the tabernacle or temple, to devote them to God, or to obtain his divine blessing. Such a practice, moreover, is said to be common among the Jews even in the present day. Hebrew parents are accustomed to take their children to the priest, during the service of the synagogue, that he may put his hand on their heads and pronounce or implore a blessing

on them. And may it not be reasonably concluded, that the Saviour's imposition of hands on the heads of those little ones, accompanied with his sacred benediction, was the token, if not the act, of conferring on them the Holy Ghost?—which, if the latter, would be a vastly greater favour than simply baptizing them with water. We are informed, that the apostles conveyed the gift of the Holy Spirit on the people by a similar laying of hands upon them. Acts viii. 15; xix. 6. The disciples who, on a particular occasion, forbade the parents to bring their little ones to Christ, did not adduce the very common and frivolous objection of our opponents, that it could do the children no good, because they were too young to understand the nature or design of such a manual imposition or divine benediction. They probably thought it would interrupt the Saviour in his present engagements, and so repulsed the parents; just as the two blind men near Jericho were bidden to desist from crying out to the Son of David, lest they should trouble the Master or arrest his progress.

The children crying in the temple, and saying, 'Hosanna to 'the Son of David,' (Matt. xxi. 15), intimates their accustomed presence in the house of God, and their association with its pleasing solemnities. That these were young children is plainly intimated from our Lord's replying to certain chief priests and scribes, who were sorely displeased at this voluntary expression of juvenile adoration; 'Have ye never read '(Ps. viii. 2), out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou 'hast perfected praise?' v. 16. It is presumable, that in the great congregations of the Hebrews, gathered to hear the apostles of Christ, especially if become favorable to the doctrines propounded by them; they, after the manner of their ancestors, brought their little ones with them, to participate in the religious rites of which they themselves were the subjects, and especially in that of Baptism, as the first and most symbolically instructive. Indeed, if all the adults went to hear the harbinger of Christ, and, as previously noted, remained from home a considerable time, who were to take care of the little children during their absence? Even had not the young been baptized with their parents, they would certainly have been present with them at the Jordan, Enon, and elsewhere, when attending the preaching of John. The like may be assumed in reference to the great multitudes that followed Christ himself and his apostles. The protracted absence of parents, especially of the humbler classes, to hear the

preaching of the gospel, necessitated their taking the little ones with them. And yet, for the children to be present with their parents, and not to be baptized with them, would have been regarded as a very strange affair to the descendants of the ancient Hebrews, who were altogether, old and young, baptized in the Red Sea. 'I do not believe,' says Dr. Lightfoot, 'the people that flocked to John's Baptism, were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the nation as not to bring their children with them to be baptized.'—A remark or two here, illustrative of our sentiments on this head, though not directly confirmative of our immediate proposition, may be admissible, and to some persons beneficially instructive.

Remark (1.) While perusing the Word of God, you can but have noticed *the very deep interest which Christ, his ministers, and his friends have ever taken in the moral and spiritual well-being of children.*—This leads us to the conclusion, that if baptism involved any covenant blessings, of which the little ones were capable of partaking—and this we know to be the fact—they would surely be baptized, even as infants were baptized in the Red Sea, and as the infant seed of Abraham were circumcised and taught for their future benefit. They are declared to be 'the heritage'—or the special possession 'of the Lord.' They were to be 'trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—in the way in which they should go.' The word which God spake to the Hebrews, he commanded all parents to 'teach diligently to their children, when sitting in the house, when walking by the way, when lying down, and when rising up.' They are 'The lambs' which the Good Shepherd 'gathers in his arms and carries in his bosom;' on whose heads the Saviour placed his hands and pronounced a blessing; and whom he declared to be patterns to his disciples of teachableness and humility. Of such, he assured his audience, were 'the kingdom of heaven'—and all this every man believes, who does not, in purpose, send them to perdition.

So, like their divine Master, holy men and women, in every age and clime, have felt the deepest concern for the spiritual conservation and growing welfare of children; and have laboured to promote their piety and eternal salvation. We, therefore, repeat the assumption, that if the baptism of infants can confer any religious benefit on them, as it certainly does, our benevolent and child-loving Father in heaven would not now withhold it from them, any more than from the children and infants that originally came out of Egypt.

Baxter devoutly observes, 'Doth Christ take them into his *arms*, and would he have them *all* put into his *visible church*? 'Would he have us receive them in his name, and yet not 'receive them into his church, nor as his disciples? How 'can infants be received in Christ's name, if they belong not 'to him and his church? Nay, doth Christ account it a 'receiving of himself, and shall I then refuse to receive them 'or acknowledge them the subjects of his visible kingdom? 'For my part, seeing Christ hath given me so full a discovery 'of his will on this point, I will boldly adventure to follow 'his rule, and had rather answer him upon his own encouragement for *admitting a hundred infants* into his church, than 'answer for keeping one out.'

Remark (2.) *The covenants of the Old Testament confirm our views on this head.*—In every general covenant which God gave to his people, children are included, as being embraced in its obligations and blessings. They were included in that made with Adam, virtually if not verbally, and they suffered sadly in consequence of his transgressing it.—Rom. v. 12, 14. In that of Noah:—'And I, behold, I establish 'my covenant with you and with your seed after you.'—Gen. ix. 9. In that of Abraham:—'And I will establish my 'covenant between thee and me, and thy seed after thee in 'their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God to 'thee, and to thy seed after thee'—from infancy till death.—Gen. xvii. 7. In that of Phineas:—'Behold I give unto him 'my covenant of peace, and he shall have it and his seed after 'him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood,' and to which they were destined from earliest babyhood.—Num. xxv. 12, 17. In that of David:—'And when thy days be fulfilled, 'and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed 'after thee.'—2 Sam. vii. 12. If then, children, as soon as they were born, were the subjects of these and other gracious covenants, and were to be bound and blessed by them; what reason can be adduced against their reception of the token or sign of them, whether it were circumcision or water baptism? If any valid objection exists we certainly have never seen it stated, nor are we sufficiently clear or far-sighted enough to find it out. It should be remarked that all the covenants made with Israel, were made verbally with men, or given to them, and not to women or children. And yet these women and children were as much interested in them as any of the males of adult age. God claimed the daughters of Israel as his own equally with the sons, and intended that all should be

equally interested in his covenants, predictions, and promises; and that they should be fully recognized as his 'sons and daughters.' The language of God, by the prophet, Ezekiel xviii. 4, gives his view of the connexion of parents and their children.—'Behold all the souls are mine! as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine.' The daughter of a Hebrew was so pure and sacred to God that she was not to be married to a Gentile, any more than a son of Abraham was to take a heathen woman to wife.—Deut. vii. 2.

Remark (3.) *The predictions of the Old Testament also unite children with the blessings promised to their parents.*—'The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.' Ps. cii. 28.—'I will pour my spirit on thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring.' Is. xlv. 3.—'And the Gentiles shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.' Is. xlix. 22.—'My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.' Is. lix. 21.—'And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.' Is. lxi. 9.—'Their children shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.' Jer. xxx. 20.—'And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.' Joel ii. 28, and Acts ii. 17.—Hence, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said unto the Jews, 'The promise is to you and to your children, and to all' [the heathen] 'that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call.' Acts ii. 39.

Here we learn, that children, equally with their parents, are included in those prophecies which refer to the New Testament state of the church. Nor do they apply to them only, after attaining a certain age, or a specific amount of knowledge, and practical holiness, but for the most part, indefinitely, from the time of their birth till the day of their death—as far as they, at any time, are capable of enjoying them—or till they personally forfeit the promised blessings by their own misconduct. It would, indeed, sound most incongruously with the spirit of the gospel, and with the



manifest benevolence of the Saviour to the young, to hear it said, 'The blessings of religion, included in the covenants of mercy, belong to the offspring of Christian professors, when they have attained the age of eighteen or twenty years, and not before!' The prophecies evidently relate to the young; and the promises as clearly apply to them, from the day of their birth; and may be enjoyed by them onward continuously, unless despised and rejected, and lost, as they advance in years, and practically rebel against the truth. The younger they are, the more manifestly do children pertain to the adoption, and are comprehended in the gracious promises of our covenant God.

On this point, 'the language of Peter is strongly emphatical.' 'The promise is to you and your children.' 'These words,' says Mr. Mends, 'were addressed to the Jews, and gave them the firmest assurance, that their children were considered in the same light by God, and entitled to the same external privileges under the gospel dispensation, as they were, under that of Moses. None, I think, can deny that the promise does, as plainly include the seed of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, as the promise to Abraham: "I will be a God to thee and thy seed." What could the apostle mean, by the promise being unto them, and unto their children?—for if they were not in covenant, they have no right to the promise.' p. 28. The persons referred to, as afar off, evidently mean the stranger and the Gentile; and are perfectly distinct from the children already in the covenant. Deut xxix. 10-13; Josh. viii. 34, 35. There seems hardly a question, that when Peter tells his hearers—in order to induce them to be baptized unto Christ—that the promise made by the prophet, not merely included them, but their children also; and that they need not fear their dear offspring would be excluded from its blessings, any more than under the former dispensation. So far from that, he assures them, that it extended even to all persons afar off, to whom the call of the gospel should be subsequently proclaimed. See Eph. ii. 13-17.

To explain and enforce the principle we are advocating, let us suppose a case. Were a wealthy and benevolent gentleman to engage to show substantial kindness to the family, household, or children of certain poor adult dependents, after they themselves had left the world; would it not be deemed strange, were it stipulated, that he would do nothing towards the maintenance, education, and comfort of the baby orphans; but would reserve his aid till they were grown up to adult age?

Would not all observers regard his benevolence as strange, capricious, and sadly withheld when most required? And yet, the construction some persons put on God's promises and covenants of mercy, would make his kindness like that of this imaginary eccentric benefactor!

The identity of parents and their offspring, in the before-named covenants and predictions, guarantees to the latter all the rites and privileges enjoyed by the former, as far as they were, at any time, intellectually and physically capable of receiving them. Of these they cannot be deprived without 'frustrating the grace of God,' developed in his holy ordinances, and mercifully and wisely designed for the young. And as baptismal consecration to God was among these benefits, who shall forbid water that they may not be disciplined to Christ in this sacred ordinance? If any venture to do so, we may ask them, what have these little ones done to forfeit their predicted covenant rights to a ceremony their parents enjoyed, and which the children in the Red Sea and their descendants afterwards regularly obtained? Where is the act of excommunication? When was it passed? And what is the recorded cause of its ratification?

To reply, that children, under the present dispensation, unlike their infant ancestors, pertaining to the former divine economies, are not to enjoy the privileges of these covenants and predictions, till they arrive at adult age, or until they are personally believers in the gospel, would have the effect of depriving them of all religious instruction, holy examples, and other advantages, till they are grown up to be men and women, and spiritually converted to God—for these means of mercy are included in those covenants and predictions, the same as the initiatory rites and spiritual consolation of a living Christianity. Besides, it would practically exclude all children from the terrestrial kingdom of God, till they were far advanced in years, though Christ has said that little infants and young children are really subjects of this kingdom. Further, should the messenger, death, convey them out of this world before their baptism, they would never have been ostensibly in the kingdom of God on earth, though, as elect and regenerated children, they were taken to the kingdom of God in heaven, when removed from among us. This would be the case with such children who might have lived in the fear of God, and in the faith of the gospel, twenty or more years, the same as if they had breathed only a dozen times. In a word, it would be shutting out the purest patterns and fairest specimens of meet-

ness for the church and heaven, while receiving only those who, at the best, are said to be but like them!

In further reference to the argument of Peter on the day of Pentecost, to induce the Hebrews to submit to Christian baptism, it may be noted, that if the promise made to Abraham was a good reason for baptizing the parents, it was equally so for baptizing their children, for they were both included in that promise. It evidently contained no motive for the parents to submit to this ceremony, if it did not for their children's dedication also. 'To suppose,' says Mr. Evans, 'that the promise was to their children, when called by divine grace, was to say no more than might be said of children of heathens and infidels, as well as the seed of Christians . . . 'If we suppose their children excluded from baptism, we make 'the apostle's argument confused and inconclusive, for then 'it would stand thus:—"The promise is *to you*; therefore, be 'ye baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The promise 'is *equally to your children*, yet let not them be baptized, for 'they are not proper subjects for baptism." But this appears 'a gross absurdity, that their children should be included in 'the promise,' [pleaded to induce the parents to be baptized], 'and not be admitted to receive the external sign of it,' [with their parents.] p. 12. That both Joel and Peter, in the passages above referred to, meant children in age, is manifest, by their distinguishing them from adults. Had the latter class of persons only been intended, they would have said so, and not have spoken of children at all. Were a promise made especially to persons when arrived at the age of manhood and social independence, no sensible person would say it was a promise to children in any proper sense of the language—for it would not be true.

Remark (4.) *These covenants and promises have been graciously realized in numberless instances.*—The profession, faith, and piety of the parent have been actually, as well as prophetically, allied with blessings on his family. The children have been benefitted 'for the fathers' sake.' Take the instances referred to in the passages previously quoted. As posterity often suffer through the sins and profligacy of those who beget them; so they are frequently blessed on account of the virtues and excellencies of their holy progenitors. This is doubtless designed to operate as a stimulus to parental piety. It may be regarded as a general rule of God's benevolent procedure, that children shall share in the blessings obtained by those who preside over them, and who, in the domestic circle,

are identified with them. Abraham's faith brought blessings on his house. When Zaccheus believed, and hospitably entertained the Saviour, salvation came to his house, or family. When Cornelius prayed, Peter was sent to tell him words whereby he and his house, or his family, should be saved. The piety of Lydia brought blessings on her house or family. Crispus believed in the Lord, and all his family was benefitted by his faith. The believing husband sanctifies his wife and family, and the believing wife sanctifies her husband and children.—These expressions, of course, cannot mean positive and everlasting happiness given unconditionally to the young. 'If thou believest, thou shalt be saved with all thy house. Surely, the apostles intended no more, when they spoke thus of the jailor, and to others, than that they and theirs should have the means of eternal happiness put into their hands; and they and theirs should be admitted and acknowledged by them, as members of Christ's church and kingdom.' *Fleming's Plea*, p. 31. Baptismal salvation was no apostolic doctrine. Still the blessings promised and enjoyed were great, and of inestimable worth.

The above are a few of the many recorded instances of parental faith connected with blessings on the offspring. 'If the root be holy, so are the branches.' If parents are ritually sanctified or set apart to God, so will be their children, who, as a matter of course, will be consecrated or disciplined to Christ by baptism. The bearing of these passages on the question of Infant Baptism is readily perceived. If through the faith of parents, blessings came upon their children, there should be some visible token or sign of it. In the case of Abraham, that token was circumcision. In the case of Israel, it was baptism unto Moses; and in the case of Christians, it is a consecration of the young to Christ, by water poured on their heads;—followed by instruction in the doctrines, duties, and privileges of the Gospel. It is hardly questionable, that the blessings promised to the parent would, as far as circumstances allowed, rest on the family. It is so in secular matters; as in the case of wealth, knowledge, and reputation. And as children are capable of baptism, instruction, and worship, these undoubtedly should be granted and enjoyed. These are the least and lowest personal spiritual benefits which come to the house of a sincere professor of the true religion. And if parents be really pious, devout, and devoted to God, we may reasonably hope for greater and more enduring benefactions for the souls of their offspring hereafter.



We may here, further, notice Paul's argument respecting the essential oneness of the Abrahamic and the Christian covenants. The reader will see this subject clearly and fully explained in the fourth chapter of the Romans, and in the third chapter of the Galatians. All believers in Christ are regarded as Abraham's seed. The ancient Patriarch is viewed as the father of all the faithful, in every dispensation, age, and country of the world. By believing in Christ, all the Gentiles are brought into covenant relationship with the ancient heirs of the promise. Into the former dispensation of the covenant, children were introduced, and became members of the body of professors of revealed truth. This was the case with all the young—having actually or virtually the seal, sign, or token, of introduction into the church or *ecclesia* of old. Now, if there be an identity in the leading and essential principles of the systems of Abraham and of Christ; if they are viewed as one and the same continuous and everlasting covenant—it must follow, that infants or the seed of believers, should be introduced into the gospel economy, either by circumcision, or by some other initiatory rite, recognized by the followers of Christ, or, in other words, by water Baptism. If this be not conceded, there is a defect in the essential elements necessary to constitute a fair identity between the two manifestations of the church of Christ, in the days of Abraham and in apostolic times. If the language of Paul have any important meaning and force in our day, children must be members of the visible church or congregation, as in Abraham's time—and be formally inducted to their religious position and blessings.

SECTION SEVENTH.—*If all the Israelites, who passed through the sea, were not baptized, who can point out and verify the exceptions?*—The 'Fathers' only are expressly mentioned. But if the entire Jewish people, male and female, adults and children, are not to be comprehended under this designation, who are? Here is a question of insurmountable difficulty,—on the supposition that the children were not baptized in their passage through the Red Sea. Shall we except the latter, because they are not specifically mentioned? Then, for the same reason, we must except all young people from twelve years old to twenty, and all females of every rank and age; for the words 'Our Fathers,' no more literally embrace them than they do the youngest babes in Israel. On the like ground, should not all the unmarried men, who



passed through the sea, be also excepted? for, at that time, they were no more fathers than the little male children in their mothers' arms. To reply, they might become fathers in the course of time, does not meet the difficulty; for so might the youngest male infants that passed through the deep. In fact, all the married men, who at last died without issue, must be also excepted, because, though legally husbands, they were never literally fathers at all. Even those married male adults, whose families became extinct before the Christian era, must also be passed by; as no Hebrews in the apostles' age could, in precise language, regard them as really their own fathers, however remote. Paul and his brethren could no more literally reckon them among their lineal ancestors than the merest infants who came out of Egypt. We again inquire, if all the congregation that passed through the sea were not intended by the words 'Our Fathers,' who shall decide on the exceptions?

If, according to Mr. Rees' reading, none but married men with families were baptized;—then not more than a tenth of the entire host who crossed the sea were consecrated to Moses. And how came they to be baptized and no one else? Were they separated from all their fellow-travellers, or were they distinguished in some miraculous manner from all the rest, and sprinkled or affused, or, if our opponents prefer, immersed, alone? And if so, where is the divine authority for this assumption? But, conclude that every one was baptized, and you remove all the difficulties of the case. This, as previously proved, comports with the current use of the term, 'Our Fathers,' in other parts of the Bible. On this natural interpretation of the words, we can act without perplexity, and without such inquisitions as a contracted rendering of them would necessarily require. We, therefore, aver that our only just and safe conclusion must be, that every Hebrew individual, old and young, male and female, who passed through the sea, was baptized and disciplined unto Moses, the teacher and leader of God's emancipated people. In a word, if infants were not baptized, then it is certain that '*all*' the fathers or religious ancestors of Paul and his Hebrew brethren, who passed through the sea, were not baptized—contrary to his declaration, which asserts that they were.—Here a few observations of practical importance may be offered.

Obs. (1.) The doctrine that none can be properly or effectually baptized, *unless they are previously regenerated by the Holy Ghost*, is not only unscriptural, but also surrounded

with insuperable difficulties.—If none but really and spiritually converted people are proper subjects for this ordinance—as most Baptists contend—then no Baptism can be regarded as scriptural and valid when the subjects of it are not unquestionably spiritual Christians, in faith, obedience, and love. Dr. Gale asserts, ‘That none are baptized but believers ‘dipped into water; and that such who are not’ [so] ‘baptized ‘are not rightly initiated, and have no title to church membership, but should be disclaimed.’ Dr. Newman says, ‘If you ‘are not rightly baptized, you, in fact, are not baptized at all.’ This is the general, if not the universal, argument of our opponents. The case of the Ethiopian Eunuch is constantly referred to in support of the doctrine; and we are told, that unless men ‘believe with the heart,’ they should not be baptized; and that without heartfelt faith in the subject, the rite is invalid. Now, to carry out this doctrine safely, there must be minute, protracted, and ample investigation into the doctrinal views, spiritual affections, conduct, and experience, of the candidate, before it can be safely settled, whether he is entitled to receive this rite, or not. There must be examinations in chief, and cross examinations, witnesses must be called and interrogated, especially in populous districts; and much time must be occupied in the important inquiry in the case of every separate individual proposed as a candidate for baptism.

But such inquisitions, most certainly, did not precede any Baptisms mentioned in the Word of God. The utmost requirement was a belief in Christ, as the Messiah, and a profession of obedience to him as the head of the church. Even now, when such investigations are prosecuted with the utmost care and diligence, by ministers of the gospel, they are frequently found totally ineffectual. Multitudes, who have undergone this scrutiny, and have been thereupon immersed, have soon evinced that they were not spiritually converted to God; and, at length, have become as heathen men and publicans to the church with which they had before been connected through their immersion. That all the care, and prayer, and scrutiny, by ministers and members, will not hinder the intrusion of unconverted persons into their religious fellowship, our opponents are forced, if not free, to confess; as a citation or two from their writings will show:—

Mr. Foot:—‘It must be acknowledged, as a lamentable ‘truth, that many are baptized, who, by their unchristian, ‘wicked lives, prove a disgrace to their profession.’ p. 71.

Mr. Stovel:—‘If a man seek salvation by baptism, without conversion to God, he acts the hypocrite, and the ceremony is reduced to a mere heathenish form. . . . If an unconverted man should gain admission to the baptism, his being born of water will not secure to him the right of Christian fellowship; this deception, perpetrated in the name of God, is no ground on which he can claim the confidence of his brethren, devoted to each other, and to God, in the spirit of martyrdom. He is born dead; and when that fact is known, he is cast out as a dead thing. . . . Those persons—the Baptists—do not baptize again.’ *Regen. lect. iii. p. 41, 44, 48.* Mr. Booth:—‘Simon the sorcerer, professing faith in Jesus Christ, though he had it not, was baptized by Philip; and many doubtless, both in former and later ages, have been baptized, on a similar profession, whose conduct afterwards disgraced the Christian character.’ We shall subsequently prove, that no efforts do or can keep out unregenerated people from fellowship with the Baptist body; and, in fact, that they admit vast numbers of them every year to their holy communions.

Now, a serious question arises. Is the baptism of such unregenerated, self-deluded, professors or, it may be, religious hypocrites, really valid or not? For all church or sectional purposes, in the Baptist communion, it is perfectly valid. Notwithstanding Mr. Stovel’s declaration, that the ceremony undergone by a hypocrite, is ‘a mere heathenish form,’ and that he is, or rather should be, ‘cast out as a dead thing;’ it is as effectual and abiding as that of the holiest man among them. As in prelatical ordination, a seal is fixed on his verbal profession which cannot be effaced. His immersion is deemed valid and scriptural during his entire earthly existence, even while he himself feels and confesses that he was unconverted, or a hypocrite, when it was administered. He may be turned out of the society, or even out of the synagogue; yet his baptism is perfect, and never renewed. If subsequently he should be savingly renewed by the grace of God, he is not immersed a second time. After having been excommunicated, after having lived many years in open wickedness; if, at length, he repent and reform, and seek re-admission into the bosom of the society, which possibly he had long despised, and from which he was formally expelled, he is received again without being immersed a second time.

Our opponents, out of pretence and policy, preach up and contend for an especial theory; and yet contradict and repudiate

it, in their uniform practice. *First*, we are gravely told, that spiritual regeneration is essential to the validity of Christian Baptism—for it would be most damaging to their theory, were the contrary openly admitted; and, *secondly*, we learn, that the baptism of a deluded professor, or of a wily hypocrite, is as valid as that of the best of men, and equally enduring in its denominational efficacy. As this theory, and this practice, without a miracle of wisdom in the examiners, cannot for certain accord, and as the theory is evidently *not* based on the precepts or precedents of Scripture; it requires little reflection to determine that the doctrine, which is purely delusive, ought to be given up; and it should be candidly admitted, that spiritual conversion of the soul to Christ cannot be an absolute requisite to the validity of Christian Baptism. This holds especially true, as our opponents regard the terms, 'Anabaptist' and 'Anabaptism,' embracing the doctrine of dipping the person a second time, to be quite 'reproachful.' Birt, p. 5.

Pedobaptist Congregational Churches examine into the sentiments, experience, and conduct of candidates prior to their induction to full membership in their select or particular churches. But this is widely different from that of our opponents, prior to baptizing them, with its subsequent enduring results. For such a fellowship in our select communions, personal piety, sound orthodoxy, and consistent behaviour, are required. Much care is necessary, in order to render our associations, as far as possible, pure and harmonious. Every member of our spiritual societies, like those of apostolic times, is rightly invested with administrative power, besides being inducted to the highest social spiritual privileges and designations of this select fellowship. He has a voice and a vote in the internal regulations of our Christian affairs. Hence, to examine well into his religious creed and character before admission, is the voice of prudence as well as of piety. But then, when elected, his position is not a freehold; nor has he a lease for life in it. The seal of his fellowship may be broken, or be taken from him, at any time, on proof of grave misconduct. If the pre-existing members are first deceived in his character, or, if after admission, he walks disorderly, he is to be 'put away,' or excommunicated, and placed in the same position he occupied previous to his induction to the inner church of the ecclesiastical body. He is unchurched, and sent out of communion, as completely as though he had never been in it. Nor is he, on the avowal of repentance, or of hopeful conversion to God, readmitted, till after undergoing



an examination similar to the first, and by the suffrages of the members, as though he had never before been one of their number.

In respect of Christian Baptism, the case is widely different. When a person is baptized to Christianity and dedicated to the blessed Trinity, it is for life. We do not baptize him again. His initiation to the external means and privileges of the gospel, we do not, we dare not, revoke; nor do we exclude him from our open Christian sanctuaries, and the external ordinances of instruction and conviction of sin—provided he conduct himself there with decorum—how badly soever he may have demeaned himself elsewhere. When we baptize children or adults, we pronounce no judgment as to their spiritual character; we thereby invest the parties with no controlling church power; we do not introduce them into the select communion of saints; we never exhibit them as examples of personal piety to others; and they sit not with us at the Lord's table. This the newly-baptized soon know; and this is also well known to all conversant with our holy usages. They themselves cannot, therefore, be deceived; nor can the fact of their dedication to God deceive others. Consequently, while inquisition is properly made into the character of candidates for full fellowship in particular churches, it is not necessary to do the like of candidates for baptism into the general church or congregation of worshippers, or into the training schools of Christianity. Hence, inquiry in the one case, and not in the other, involves not the slightest inconsistency, any more than there would be by receiving a youth into a public seminary, without strict and minute inquiry into his previous conduct; and making it before taking him into an office of trust or power, or into partnership in some important business or undertaking.

Obs. (2.) In no less predicament is the doctrine, *That no children should be baptized, one or both of whose parents are not real Christians*—Here, again, if otherwise, a court of inquiry would be requisite. If the baptism be not valid, unless genuine parental piety induce its administration to the young; then, whatever child is baptized, without having a really pious father or mother or both, is, in truth, not baptized at all; and the ceremony, though performed by the holiest minister, in the most scriptural manner, must go for nothing; and the rite should be reiterated when the parent or parents, in subsequent years, are actually converted by the grace of God. On this principle, thousands and tens of thousands of



children, the offspring of mere nominal Christians, are still not scripturally, and, therefore, not really baptized, and not entitled to the rights and privileges to which this sacrament officially introduces duly qualified subjects. If we may baptize only the children, one or both of whose parents are members of our select churches, as some people contend; we shall still be met by the difficulty of knowing whether, though in full Christian fellowship, they are truly godly people—unless it must be taken for granted, that all the members of such societies, are really and unquestionably the true spiritual children of God. But who will venture, for a moment, positively to arrive at such a conclusion?

Again, there are, doubtless, many converted parents, who, for certain reasons or motives, have never joined a particular Christian church. But are their children not to be baptized, or never to be formally consecrated to God, even though their subsequent training may be more scriptural and careful than that of many others, whose parents are full members of evangelical Christian societies? Or, are pastors and churches to deprive children of certain honours and benefits, because their parents, though designated Christians, fail to unite themselves with some particular fellowship of professed believers? The objection, that as unconverted persons do not feel the full importance of vital godliness, they are not likely to train up their offspring “in the way in which they should go;” or, in other words, are not inclined or qualified to carry out the Christian purposes of Infant Baptism; they should not bring their children to the font—though involving a mournful fact—is quite irrelevant to the question; unless it can be proved, that if people will not perform two scriptural and naturally consecutive deeds, they should not be encouraged or allowed to do either of them separately; or, that because they are likely to sin openly in the week, they should not be admonished to keep holy the sabbath day; or, that because they are not likely to observe the injunctions of the Bible, they should not be advised to read it; or, that because they are not likely to comply with the teachings of the pulpit, they should not be admitted to the public preaching of the gospel! If it be right for parents to baptize their infants, this duty is not to be neglected because some other parental act, properly allied with it, is not likely to be performed afterwards. What minister would feel justified in refusing to marry a couple of young people, merely because he entertained a serious doubt whether they would properly fulfil their obligations as husband and

wife in after years?—so keeping them single, lest, if united, they might not be happy! God certainly did not except from baptism in the Red Sea, the children of ungodly parents.

We learn that under the Levitical economy, parties were permitted to do some acts of a religious kind, who might not do others of a higher order. The uncircumcised stranger was not permitted to eat the passover. Ex. xii. 48. But he might bring his offering to the altar of the Lord. Num. xv. 14-16. 'And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever he be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; as ye do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations; as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord, &c.' Mr. Scott, on this passage, observes, 'The intention of this law might be, to induce strangers to attend the worship and ordinances of God; to intimate to the Israelites, that if they became profligates and ungodly, they would be treated as strangers; and to signify that in due time the Gentiles would be fully admitted into the church. Though uncircumcised persons might not eat the passover, they might offer other sacrifices in the appointed way; if they were so disposed. These regulations referred to sacrifices and ordinances only; not to public offices, nor to marriages.' I have cited the above texts and comment to confirm the proposition, that persons, not fully recognized as genuine disciples of Christ, may and ought to do certain religious deeds, while they might not be allowed to do some others; and to show, that there would be no very great incongruity in bringing their children and offering them to the Lord, though they might not be allowed to attend the Lord's Supper, nor be initiated, as full members, into the spiritual communion or fellowship of the true saints of God. That unconverted persons may do many religious things cannot be questioned; and that the baptizing of their children is not one of those things, it devolves on the persons holding that opinion to prove.

That there were exceptions to the religious actions of certain unsanctified characters among the Jews, there is no question; the instance just alluded to is manifest. But there were many deeds which all who openly professed the religion of the Hebrews, whether devout or profane, were not only permitted, but commanded to do. Among these, the dedication of their children to God, by circumcision and baptism, was

certainly one. All were commanded, under severe penalties, to dedicate their offspring to the Lord. Not a single proviso is given—as ‘If the parents are holy, moral, or worthy.’ It was to be done by every Israelite of every rank, age, or character. Though they might be under the divine displeasure—though their oblations might be despised, and though the severest expressions of God’s indignation might be uttered against them; the circumcision and consecration of their children to God is never prohibited, never discouraged, and, for aught we read, was never omitted; and it never could be, without increasing the criminality of the ungodly parents. So the purification of their unclean children, and the due education of them, were not to be overlooked on the ground of their own personal unworthiness. These parental duties were not to be ignored by their own other transgressions of the laws of heaven. The inference is, that as far as the arrangements, in the ancient church of God, can be a directory under the present economy, all parents professing the Christian religion are not merely allowed to dedicate them to God in Baptism, but are actually bound to do it, and also to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, even though they themselves are not spiritually converted to the Lord. Those who were not Israel, but only of Israel, must dedicate their offspring to God. And so those who are not Christians in heart and life, but only of Christians in profession—of the creed or society of Christians—are bound to do the same, unless evidence can be given to show, that God’s plan under the law, is entirely reversed under the gospel. Certainly, those who base Christian baptism on Jewish circumcision cannot well rebut our present argument.

Further, suppose it were a doctrine generally taught in our schools and congregations, (and if it be true, it ought to be promulgated universally,) that unless one of the parents were a spiritually regenerated person, at the time of the baptism of their children, such a baptism was unscriptural and invalid; what doubts and anxieties would naturally arise in the mind of many of our serious young attendants? They might entertain no question about Infant Baptism, as being a doctrine of revelation; but only respecting the validity of their own—conscious that their parents were not truly pious when it took place. Many adult Pedobaptists, brought under the sound of the gospel, religiously enlightened, and devoutly impressed by the ministry of the truth, must look back with sorrow to their early days, and readily discover, that when this rite was

administered to them, their parents were not renewed in their hearts, and neither of them was a member of a truly spiritual church. The inquiry might arise, and, in some minds, with great and painful force, whether or not they were rightly baptized at first, or whether it must be done over again. If told that the children of spiritual believers only should be admitted to this rite; and fearing that they had received it, when neither of their parents was regenerated by the Holy Spirit; what are they to do in the emergency? Are they to catechize their aged parents, as to their piety at the time of their juvenile dedication to God, and to sit in judgment upon their past parental conduct? Or are they to be rebaptized; or must they quietly put up with an imperfect or unscriptural ceremony? Here is their difficulty. They solicit advice. The Baptist says, You have not been baptized at all; let me dip you! Another replies, It was not properly done; but you may safely put up with it! Our answer is, You were scripturally initiated into the school of Christ; and should now duly attend to its advantages and obligations.

The advocates of the doctrine we are opposing believe, that in the apostolic times, parents and children were baptized together—the latter on the ground of their connexion with the former. But what evidence is there that all the adults were regenerated previous to baptism? That they believed the message they heard, and tacitly agreed to comply with its claims, may be readily conceded. But this does not prove, what the parties seem to contend for—that one of the parents, at least, was a *real and spiritual disciple of Christ*. Indeed, if they contend for any thing less, they aim at little to the purpose; since none but believers, in a general sense, would bring their children to the font to receive this rite. Dr. Wardlaw, probably the most able advocate of baptizing only the children of genuine believers, thus states the case: ‘Whatever qualifications render it warrantable to baptize the parent’s self, render it warrantable to include his infant offspring with him in the administration of the ordinance; and whatever qualifications in the parent render it warrantable to baptize his children, render it equally warrantable to baptize himself.’ *Diss.* p. 271. Now the question is, What qualifications are absolutely necessary to warrant the baptism of an adult? He says, ‘I have no objection to the statement [of Dr. Halley] that the apostles baptized “*all applicants*,” provided application be understood to imply *professing to receive their doctrine*; nor have I any objection, further, to the statement



'that they received such applicants, leaving their characters to 'be formed and tested by subsequent events; that is, not 'waiting till the genuineness of the professed reception of the 'doctrine, involved in the application, had been tried and 'satisfactorily ascertained.' *Ib.* p. 300. We gather, then, that the Apostles baptized such as believed the truth of the doctrines they preached—that Jesus was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. This, however, affords no evidence of regeneration of heart, or of saving faith; and that the children of such nominal adherents of the gospel were baptized, is plainly admitted, and this is all we contend for.

Obs. (3.) The only course to be pursued, in order to avoid these and similar difficulties, is, *To baptize all the adults that devoutly desire it, and all the children that are brought for that purpose.*—It was doubtless, from a similar view of the perplexities involved in the contracted scheme just propounded, that a very intelligent Baptist minister lately declared to a friend of mine, that he was prepared to baptize any persons, of good moral conduct, who applied to him to administer the rite to them. We may take it as granted, that neither heathens, Jews, avowed infidels, nor open enemies to Christianity, will solicit baptism for themselves or their families; and that others who do so, in the present day and country (now a civil registration of baptism is not required for any social or political purpose) are, in the general sense of the words, believers and Christians. That these terms are frequently applied to mere professors of the gospel will be questioned by none who carefully examine the records of the first churches, or the current vocabularies of existing religious communions, of all persuasions. Besides, as on the principles of the parties I am now referring to, regeneration is not required in the candidates for baptism, nor viewed as being imparted by the ceremony; no sane person will be led to build his hopes of adoption into the spiritual family of God, on the mere ground of his being baptized into the congregation of professing worshippers of Christ; and with any other class of people it is in vain to reason. While, on the other hand, a profession to baptize no adults except genuine believers, is apt to excite in the minds of self-deluded professors the fearful assumption, that, after receiving this rite, they are, beyond all doubt, the children of the Most High, by a spiritual regeneration. Our views of this subject remove every difficulty and unwarranted responsibility out of the way of the administrator, and all danger of deluding the souls of



the baptized. It also evidently harmonizes with the baptism in the Red Sea, in which good and bad were alike consecrated to Moses; with that of John, in which, as far as we can discover, few of his converts were truly and spiritually enlightened and religious persons; and with that of the Apostles, who certainly never made the new-birth a test of meetness for receiving this ceremony.

Again, the scheme we are opposing, would often issue in discipling to Christ, those who ultimately receive no material present practical benefit from the baptismal rite; and in refusing it to others who subsequently become the most sincere and effective servants of the Son of God. We know that all are born in sin and shapen in iniquity—as well the children of real saints as the children of open sinners: consequently, the distinction contended for by many good men, cannot be fairly founded on any natural difference in the condition of the young. Though we entertain more hope of future piety in the offspring of holy than of unholy parents, from the more assiduous and prayerful use of appropriate means for their salvation; yet history and observation teach us, that many children of converted parents, unhappily, live and die in sin; and that many children of unconverted parents, through the overruling providence and sovereign grace of God, are early led into the path of evangelical holiness, and continue therein all the days of their lives. Indeed, many unrenewed parents are very anxious about the religious training of their families; even more so than some who *profess* the warmest love to God, (especially those of the Antinomian cast, who too frequently leave the spiritual good of their children only to God, without the use of appropriate Christian measures to effect it,) while the means employed by the mere nominal professors of the gospel are not unfrequently and effectually blessed by the Holy Spirit. The practice, then, of baptizing only the children of really converted parents, would often result in withholding the rite from those who subsequently become spiritual disciples of Christ; while duly administering it to others who soon forsake the school of the gospel, and live and die in the open transgression of the laws of God. The difficulty involved in this case can be removed only by adopting the plan of discipling all who apply, or are brought to receive this ordinance.

Those who argue, from what they consider to be the sense of scripture, that none but spiritual Christian believers, or the children of truly pious parents, are proper subjects for baptism; should, on the like principle, contend, that unless the admi-

nistrator himself were a man of God, in judgment, heart, and conduct, the rite would be as unevangelical as if the subjects were totally destitute of proper qualifications for its reception. If you turn to New Testament precedents, you will read of no persons performing this ceremony, who were not regarded by their brethren as sincere and real disciples of Christ. Nor is there even the slightest intimation given, that the sacrament is valid, when administered by unconverted ministers, any more than when performed on unqualified subjects. Admitting this to be a fair statement of the facts of the case, it follows, on the principle of the objectors to the baptism of unregenerate adults, or the children of unconverted parents, because such is assumed to be unscriptural, that all baptisms performed by men not spiritually regenerated are also unscriptural and invalid. It does not appear that the rite may not be vitiated or neutralized by the unfitness of the administrator as much as by the unfitness of the candidate. Therefore, an inquisition must be made into the character and condition of the ministers who baptize either the old or the young, before their administration can be regarded by our opponents as proper and effectual. This becomes especially imperative, as it is now well known or, at least, generally believed, that many who baptize others in or with water, have themselves never been baptized with the Holy Ghost.

That the baptism of an ungodly adult is practically valid, though theoretically repudiated, among our immersing opponents, has, I think, been clearly established. That the actual baptism of the offspring of unconverted parents is also valid, in the opinion of those who contend for baptizing only the children of genuine Christians, by aspersion, may be gathered from the following concession of Dr. Wardlaw:—‘It is possible that some Pedobaptists, may hold one opinion, and some another, as to the propriety of re-baptizing those children, when they come to maturity and profess the faith; whose parents, at the time of their baptism, were living without God—but no ground of objection to the views either of Baptists or Pedobaptists could be more futile. For my own part, my young friends, I see little cause for distressing yourselves upon the subject. When your parents had the ordinance administered to *you*, it ought to have been understood by *them*. If they understood it not, or did not properly consider its import, and its connexion with their duty, and did not act according to the obligations and the encouragements recognized in it; *they* were to be blamed,

‘and *you* were to be pitied. But the meaning of the ordinance ‘was not thereby altered; and *if you are now satisfied of the scriptural ground for infant baptism*, any suspicion or conviction of the want of faith in your parents can no more be ‘a valid reason for your being re-baptized, than the suspicion ‘or conviction of the inadequacy of a previous profession, ‘would be a valid reason *to the believer in adult baptism only*, ‘for re-baptizing an adult, who should come to make that ‘profession in earnest, which he had before made with care- ‘lessness or insincerity. In either case, the recognition of ‘the ordinance with a right understanding and an honest ‘heart, should be considered as sufficient.’—Diss. p. 145. Notwithstanding the supposed blame of the parents, and the pitiable state of the children, the baptism of the latter is admitted to be valid, which must mean, that, though it is not the best way, it is passable, or, at any rate, it is not contrary to the Word of God.

I would ask the advocates for baptizing only the children of godly and regenerated parents, whether they would feel justified in teaching the youthful progeny of unregenerated people the doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel? Universal practice answers in the affirmative. Indeed, they would be shocked at the notion of refusing to instruct even the seed of infidels and practical heathens in the truths of our holy religion. But if such children may be treated *as* the disciples of Christ, or *as* pupils in a Christian seminary, why may they not undergo the ceremony which ministerially and officially constitutes and recognizes them young disciples, and entitles them to a Christian education? If an unregenerate paternity would prevent the baptism of infants, would it not equally prevent the religious and systematic instruction of the unbaptized? Christ’s law is, first baptize, and then teach. The objector would not only teach such children, but he would do it without administering what he believes to be the prior act of baptism. This is an inconsistency, which, I think, has only to be seen and felt, to promote the practice I am advocating—the baptism of all who are brought to receive this rite. To refuse baptism to the children of unconverted, and even of immoral people, with the hope of producing conviction of sin and repentance in the applicant, is unauthorized by either the letter or the spirit of scripture, and is by no means likely to effect the desired result, but rather the contrary. One might as justly refuse to speak to such people in a Christian spirit, or to admit them to public worship, or to family prayer, as to

refuse to dedicate their innocent offspring to its Maker, because the parents were not born from above. It must be a very credulous and susceptible mind, that would be piously and favourably impressed by such conduct: most would be indignant, and grow more averse to the religion which would not benefit the children, because God had not savingly converted their parents.

Finally, on this point, the advocates of baptizing only the children of believing and truly godly parents, hold, equally with their brethren, that all infants, whether the offspring of sinners or of saints, dying while young, go to the kingdom of glory. They argue, that before these little ones are taken to heaven, they are regenerated or baptized by the Holy Spirit; and that if they have a capacity for receiving the grace signified by water baptism, they are surely qualified to receive the sign of it—water baptism itself. Here, then, their restricted views, concerning the subjects of this ordinance, are destroyed by their arguments in defence of Infant Baptism generally—nor can it be otherwise, unless they are prepared to prove, that all the children of unconverted parents, dying in infancy, are incapable of regeneration, and are universally excluded from the world of future happiness, when they leave the present! Moreover, I am not aware, that any of these gentlemen, when taking the children of unholy parents in their arms, would not, like their divine Master, say, ‘Of such is ‘the kingdom of God,’ as readily as they would use the same language concerning the children of the holiest members in their spiritual societies. This qualification for being ‘of the ‘kingdom of God,’ is clearly a valid reason for their being formally introduced into this kingdom, notwithstanding the unholy character of their parents—at least, such must be the inference, unless this requisite fitness were relative and not personal—in the parent and not in the child; or unless it could be proved that the children of the saints are inherently better than the children of sinners; which cannot be done, and, I believe, is never attempted—no evidence of it being anywhere to be found. Besides, what proof is there that the infants our Lord took up in his arms, and respecting which he employed the language above referred to, were undoubtedly the offspring of truly godly parents? Certainly, nothing of the kind is averred in the holy narratives.

SECTION EIGHTH.—*That Paul practised Infant Baptism, as well as pleaded and sanctioned it, may be reasonably*



*inferred.*—That the Apostle, in his appeal to the Corinthians, recognized, sanctioned, and pleaded, the Baptism of Infants in the Red Sea, we deem to be manifest in the text, and to have been rendered indisputable by our preceding remarks upon it. This will be made still more apparent as we advance in our inquiry. Assuming this to be true, the administration of this rite, by the inspired writer himself, or by his direction, which amounts to the same thing, can scarcely be a question of grave disputation between reasonable men. You will observe that the apostle is not writing as an historian, simply recording foregone transactions; but as a teacher, arguing with a people he himself had baptized about three years before; and admonishing them, as a baptized community, to take heed to their spirit and conduct; enforcing his appeal by a reference to their predecessors, who, though baptized by Jehovah himself, had afterwards sinned and fallen under the divine displeasure. Had there been any material discrepancies between the two baptisms, in the Red Sea and at Corinth, his argument, so far, would have been inappropriate and invalid. If, on administering this rite to ‘many of the Corinthians,’ Acts xviii. 8, he had purposely and avowedly omitted children, the analogy would, to a very great degree, have been affected and, indeed, incomplete, and his admonitions very much limited in their application.

To reply, that the Corinthians believed before they were baptized, in no measure militates against our conclusion. The Hebrews must have thoroughly believed in the mission of Moses before they or their children were baptized, or they never would have followed him out of Egypt, and ventured through the sea. On emerging from the deep, their faith was greatly confirmed; as was that of our Lord’s disciples after witnessing the progressive miracles performed by him. ‘And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.’ Ex. xiv. 31. Abraham’s personal faith was sufficient to secure circumcision, with all its social and spiritual blessings, to his children, and to their seed after them. Many other instances, of a similiar federal headship, securing rites and benefits to posterity, even in their infantile condition, might be mentioned. The case of Jewish proselytes, to which special reference will be subsequently made, is a striking corroboration of this doctrine. Let it be observed, that if Paul and his colleagues baptized but a single infant or child in the whole course of their protracted ministry, or if in the



households—and probably there were thousands of them consecrated to God by baptism—there had been but one child, the question about Infant Baptism, every where and in all ages, is finally settled;—for myriads of other little ones must evidently have undergone the like ceremonial.

There cannot be a reasonable doubt, that, in this interesting and important matter, a uniformity was observed by the first ministers and churches of Christ; as it was during many centuries afterwards—if the histories of those ages are to be credited, or to be regarded as of any weight in this investigation. In a passage, subsequently cited, Mr. Noel assumes, that if but one clear case of immersion baptism can be established in the New Testament, dipping in every other case may be safely assumed. He fixes on that of the Eunuch. How far he has established his point, the reader will decide. In my view he has utterly failed. On the other hand, the high probability of Paul's baptizing infants—after having referred to the baptism of hundreds of thousands of them in the Red Sea, and having pleaded the act as the ground of a powerful argument in favour of stedfastness in the faith, and perseverance in consistent holiness, must be felt by every candid reader. And further, on Mr. Noel's principle, I might as justly contend, that if but one instance of sprinkling the baptized can be established, or rendered probable, in the New Testament, sprinkling in every other case may be as safely assumed.

To render our deductions still more palpable and convincing, let it be supposed, that instead of baptizing the Corinthians, it had been recorded, that Paul had circumcised them, and had argued in the following manner: 'All Our Fathers were 'circumcised in the wilderness; but they soon broke the 'covenant of circumcision, and fell under the wrath of God. 'Now these were our examples, to the intent that we should 'not lust after evil things as they also lusted. . . . These 'things happened unto them for ensamples, and are written 'for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are 'come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take 'heed lest he fall. See that ye break not your covenant of 'circumcision in the same manner, and fall under the like 'displeasure of the Almighty. I speak as unto wise men, 'judge ye what I say.' In this assumed case, no person would ever have concluded that Paul had not circumcised the male infants of the proselyted Christian people at Corinth, even though he never mentioned them by name; and on this

simple ground, that they all knew the male infants of the Hebrews had certainly been circumcised in the time of Moses. Now, it is as certain that children were baptized in the Red Sea, as that the male infants were circumcised in Canaan. Consequently, if our reasonings in the former case would apply to the latter, which will hardly be doubted, then children were certainly baptized by Paul at Corinth.

Besides, if this inference cannot be sustained, Paul's argument is imperfect, the premises being twice as large as the deduction, and that, too, without his giving the slightest intimation, that such a partial and illogical consequence was ever intended by him. Every ordinary reader of his address must have come to the conclusion, that his appeal assumed, as a known fact, that he baptized the children of the converted Corinthians. Indeed, no other could have been fairly inferred from it. If Paul did not personally, or by deputy, baptize these children, it rests with those who hold and advocate that opinion to develop some serious discrepancy in his reasoning, by which children, though not specially mentioned, were regarded as excluded from this baptismal rite. Till this be plainly and satisfactorily accomplished, our position must be conceded, that the Apostle not only recognized, sanctioned, and pleaded Infant Baptism; but that he universally practised it. I may just add here, that as we advance in our investigations, the reader will discover the fact, that some of our most talented and intelligent opponents arrive at the conclusion, that Jewish Proselyte baptism was common before and during the time of Christ; not from any positive command, but from the great probability and reasonableness of the case. Our conviction, that Paul himself, and all the other Apostles, baptized infants, is based, not on any literally expressed statement of the fact, but, on the probabilities and reasonableness of it—on which principle of deduction we follow the example of our clever and cautious antagonists. In a word, few persons, who admit the truth of our preceding statements, will refuse their assent to the doctrine, that Paul did actually baptize children at Corinth, and in many other parts of the world.

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

It may be readily anticipated, that clear and conclusive as our foregoing statements and deductions appear to our own minds; various objections will be made against them, by the

ardent opponents of Infant Baptism. It will, therefore, be necessary here, though at the risk of occasional repetitions, plainly to state, and fully to meet such objections; in order that, if possible, no doubts may be ultimately felt, even by the most incredulous reader, as to the validity of our facts, and the legitimacy of our inferences.

In this part of our inquiry, I shall not confine my replies to objections brought directly and simply against the fact I have been endeavouring to establish, that multitudes of children were baptized in the Red Sea; but shall recur to others which our opponents generally adduce in opposition to Infant Baptism, on whatever grounds that doctrine may be based, by its respective advocates. This will account for the length of this part of our subject; the importance of which will be deemed a sufficient apology. It will also be seen, that many arguments and illustrations previously given to support our propositions, will be again adduced to meet the subsequent allegations of our opponents. The reiteration of them, though undesirable in some respects, may have the effect of familiarizing them to the mind of the ordinary reader.

OBJECTION I. *Children are not expressly said to have been baptized in the Red Sea; therefore, we are not bound to believe that they were.*—But we have seen, that terms are employed by the Apostle, which unquestionably include all the infants, as well as all the adults, who passed through the sea. We have seen, further, that a vast multitude of children did actually pass through the sea with their parents; and that, when in this state of transit, the adults were baptized, their little ones, without the intervention of a miracle, must have been baptized also at the same time, in the same place, and in the same manner. Yet no such miracle is mentioned; and no exception of the children is even remotely hinted at, by the Inspired Writer. Further, the objection would also exclude ‘Our Mothers’ as much as their infant offspring; for there is not a word in the statement of Paul, informing us, that women, any more than their children, were baptized with the men. It is a remarkable circumstance, that while the little ones are referred to as swelling the mighty host, leaving Egypt for the Red Sea, the women are not once mentioned as pertaining to it. ‘And the children of Israel journeyed ‘from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on ‘foot that were men, besides children.’ Ex. xii. 37. That adult females, though not specified, were really baptized, no person affects to doubt. And if exclusion, on the ground of

nondescription, cannot be admitted in the case of the women, no more can it be in the case of the children. In truth, the precise terms used by the Apostle would literally include male infants before their pious and beloved mothers; for, in respect of sex, they were really more 'Our Fathers' than the wives of the first princes of Israel.

By the way, according to the strict verbal import of legal phraseology used respecting Coroners' Inquests, our opponents might, with equal propriety assume, that no women or children were ever accidentally killed in this country, since the verdicts in such cases, are always brought in, not woman, nor baby, but 'Man Slaughter.' Again, as we read only of the *Pilgrim Fathers*, who formerly left England for America, to escape religious persecution at home; must we conclude that there were neither women nor children connected with this great Puritan Emigration? When Paul says, he does not allow 'a woman'—a married woman—'to speak in the church,' are we to conclude, that spinsters or widows might with propriety openly address the congregated body! And when we talk of our 'Forefathers,' do we not also and equally mean and include our 'Foremothers?' And does not the term 'Our Ancestors,' include all our natural predecessors, of both sexes and of all ages—from a day old, to that of threescore years and ten?

It is remarkable, that an infant of eight days old, is called a *man* by the Lord himself: 'Ye on the sabbath day circumcise a *man* . . . If a *man* on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken.' John vii. 22, 23. Even new-born babes are designated men. Eve 'bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a *man* from the Lord.' Gen. iv. 1. 'She remembereth no more her sorrow for joy that a *man* is born into the world.' John xvi. 21. Consequently, when we read of *men* being baptized, we have no certainty that half of them were not infants of eight days' old or even under; unless the connexion indicate that they, unquestionably, were of riper age. It was also customary to designate the young of the herd and the flock by the names literally descriptive only of the old.—'Likewise shalt thou do with thine *oxen*, and with thy *sheep*; seven days shall it be with his dam; on the eighth day shalt thou give it me.' Ex. xxii. 30.

In arguing in favour of females sitting down at the Lord's table, our opponents contend, that the Greek word *anthropos*, *man*, includes women as well as men; and on that ground they contend for their right to the sacramental table of the Lord's Supper.—This we admit. But the term also includes



children as well as adults—mankind in general. The expression—‘men’—*anthropoi*—‘were baptized,’ contains as good an argument in favour of Infant Baptism, as the other phrase—‘men’—*anthropoi*—‘sat down at the Lord’s Supper,’ would do in favor of female communion. In all cases of this kind the leading terms must be interpreted specifically or generally according to circumstances.

Had the Apostle meant to tell the Corinthians, that only adult males, or adults generally, had been baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea, he could have done so as plainly, and as briefly, as in the language he has actually employed. Nor, with such a purpose, would he have used expressions relative to the act and subjects of Baptism, which he must have well known his readers at Corinth would, most probably, if not necessarily, interpret or understand, as comprehending children equally with adults. Had he been an Antipedobaptist, he would have said, in effect, ‘The ‘regenerated men and women, of full age, when passing ‘through the sea, were baptized unto Moses; but the little ‘ones, though brought into precisely the like local and relative ‘positions, were, by some means or other, beyond my powers ‘of conception, excluded from the operation, and the advantages ‘of its sacred administration.’

If he were not a practical Pedobaptist, he was sadly off his guard in his unqualified address to the Congregation at Corinth. Even Mr. Noel, notwithstanding his many concessions to his opponents, never surrendered the cause he advocates to the friends of Infant Baptism so completely as the Apostle Paul has done, in his address to the Congregation at Corinth—provided he never believed in, nor practised, this rite on little children. The sagacious Abraham Booth certainly would never have expressed himself so unguardedly, and so much in favour of Infant Sprinkling. But Paul was no Antipedobaptist. Dr. Wall’s remark on this head is to the point. ‘If a master give a command to his servant, in ‘short, to take care of his flock’ [of sheep] ‘shall an arrogant ‘servant excuse himself, that he did not in the commission ‘*particularly* name the lambs?’ v. iii. p. 145. God brought Israel up out of the sea with Moses, ‘the shepherd of his flock.’ Is. lxiii. 11. Surely there were many lambs under his care and protection; though Paul does not particularly distinguish them.

OBJECTION II. *The children and infants, who passed through the Red Sea, had not the knowledge essential for*



*baptism, and, therefore, would not have been baptized with their enlightened parents.*—This doctrine and deduction are not only opposed to fact, but are based on an assumption destitute of any valid foundation. The import of the objection is, that children might not then, and may not now, be baptized, unless they could comprehend the nature and purport of this religious act. But we all know, that instances are of daily occurrence—to which no reasonable man objects—wherein young children are placed under personal obligations, are bound by covenants, and are blessed by promises, of which, at the time, they are totally ignorant, and in which, of course, they never express their concurrence. Though ever so young, they are made members of the commonwealth, and of benefit societies; are admitted tenants of estates, and the like. Why, then, may they not become members of a religious community, for which they are as fully qualified, as for being members of a voluntary association? Or why should our opponents protest against such a position as unreasonable in religious matters, and yet daily act upon it in those which are social and secular? If there be any inconsistency or absurdity in the one case, there is the like equally in the other.

The rite of circumcision, originally appointed by Jehovah, proves, beyond all doubt, that infants of eight days old might be the subjects of an instructive ceremonial, and be thereby laid under obligations, in after years, to keep laws they had never read, and be placed in relationships to enjoy future blessings of which, at the time, they cannot have formed the slightest conception. (Acts xv. 1, 10; Gal. v. 3.) Till these effects of infant circumcision can be successfully disproved, or be clearly shewn to have originated in gross ignorance of human nature and covenant obligations; the argument against Infant Baptism, based on the simple ground of juvenile incapacity, must ever be regarded as irrelevant, and even frivolous in the highest degree. It might, with as much reason, be asserted, that infants were not capable of receiving, and of being benefitted by, the Saviour's blessing, when he put his hands on their heads; as that they could not receive, or be benefitted by the Saviour's baptism, administered by his holy apostles. An old writer has justly remarked, that 'though infants cannot lay hold on Christ, he can lay hold of them;' and we know that even adults, before renewed in their minds, will not lay hold on Christ, till he has first, by his Spirit, laid hold of them.

That children, notwithstanding their ignorance, are capable

of being regenerated by divine grace, will be questioned by few intelligent Christians. And if so, why must they be incapacitated for receiving baptism with water, the sign and symbol of this great internal renovation? or, at least, why should their *ignorance* incapacitate them for it? John the Baptist 'was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.' That this gracious Spirit may dwell in other infant hearts is, therefore, possible and far from improbable. In truth, we know from God's Word, and also from sad experience and observation, that the seeds, germs, or elements, of evil may dwell in the souls of young children. There is in them the capacity for containing, fostering, and perfecting moral corruption. Hence, it is written, 'except a man' [TIS, *any one*] 'be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' This language includes the unconscious infant as much as the hoary-headed sinner. On one occasion, a man brought his son to Christ to be healed of a dumb spirit, which had often cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. 'And Jesus asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? and he said, Of a child.' Mark ix. 17-27.

On the like ground of capacity, it follows, that the seeds, germs, or elements of grace, imparted by the Holy Ghost, may also exist in an infant's mind. Both cases are mysterious, as to their properties, and modes of mental inhabitation. But the latter is not more so than the former. It is as easily credited, that divine influence may dwell in childish hearts, as that sinful or satanic influences should there take up an unrighteous residence. Nor is it manifestly beyond the power of God, or the energy of the Holy Spirit, to effect that divine change in the mind of a child, destined to an early grave, which we call regeneration, and which, we are assured, is essential to every one previous to entering the kingdom of God. We feel warranted to regard all who leave the world in childhood, as being elect according to the divine foreknowledge, and, through the grace of Christ, taken to glory when they die; and that, too, in spite of their 'ignorance and 'unconsciousness.' They are capable of being baptized by the Holy Ghost in their earliest life; and who would contend that this ignorance and unconsciousness render them incapable of receiving the symbol of it—which consists of baptism with water?

Infants, unquestionably, were baptized in the Red Sea, and, consequently, they may be so now at the font, as far as capacity is concerned, without any present knowledge of the

subject, or any voluntary concurrence in the rite.—Human nature has ever been the same in every clime and class of mankind. Whatever information or inclination may be necessary in adults, prior to their baptism; it is certain, that such is not required in the case of infants, prior to their baptism; any more than it was essential in Hebrew infants, prior to their circumcision. For further exposition of the doctrine, let the reader turn to his Bible, and he will perceive that children, from a month old and upwards, were constituted keepers of the charge of the sanctuary. Num. iii. 22. At a prior age, they were capable of receiving ‘the seal of the ‘righteousness of faith.’ Rom. iv. 11. They are designated ‘Holy or Saints.’ 1 Cor. vii. 14. And they are plainly called ‘Disciples’ when old enough to be circumcised. Acts xv. 10. If they possess a capacity for all this, who will deny them the capacity requisite for being consecrated or discipled to Christ by baptism?

The want of knowledge is not, in all instances, a bar to our reception of the divine guidance and blessings. How often are we, even in advanced life, the subjects of God’s dealings and providences, concerning the nature, purport, and issue of which we, at the time, are as unconscious as infants can be of their dedication to Christ; and by which, notwithstanding our ignorance, we may be benefitted many years afterwards. Under such mysterious dispensations, we take courage and gather comfort from the promise, that what the Saviour does, though we ‘know not now, we shall know hereafter.’ Few persons, when inclined to confer some substantial token of their affection on infants, however young, would feel that a deed of gift, or a last will and testament, in their favour, would be ineffective or useless, because the little ones were not in a condition to understand the nature of legal documents, the benevolence that dictated them, nor the terms and provisos on which the gifts and bequests were to be subsequently received and enjoyed.

Dr. Cox objects that, ‘neither reason, judgment, conscience, ‘nor affection, are necessary to the due observance of this ‘rite’ of Infant Baptism. p. 10. Nor were they necessary to the due observance of circumcision, nor to the Baptism of Infants in the Red Sea, nor to their obtaining numberless blessings, both temporal and spiritual. Mr. Dore says ‘The ‘religion of Christ is, in all its branches, a reasonable service.’ p. 17. And is not dedicating a child to God, according to God’s command, a reasonable service in its parents? Is it

not a reasonable service for children to be taught the first catechism of Christianity; though they may understand little or nothing of its meaning at the time? Was not circumcision a reasonable service! And is not the dry dedication of a Baptist baby a reasonable service! Mr. Pengelly remarks, 'Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ.' p. 95. He means, it should be the act of the baptized, and not of the baptizer. Yet, the circumcision of infants was an act of obedience; and so was the purification of children, when ceremonially polluted. But in neither case was it the act of the children themselves, but of those who performed the service. In the baptism of infants, God is obeyed, and by the only persons who have the right or power to render this act of obedience to him. In baptism, even of adults, baptism is never the *act* of the baptized, but of the baptizer—the former being only a passive subject, acted upon by another.

OBJECTION III. *A high moral character, and a considerable advance in age, are essential prerequisites to baptism.*—These, it is argued, the children in the Red Sea, not having attained, could not have been properly baptized unto Moses. This, like the preceding objection, is based on a groundless assumption, and is fully answered by the Apostle Paul, and by an appeal to historical facts. With reference to MORAL ATTAINMENTS. Admitting that, in the case of adults, some moral prerequisites were necessary to their baptism; it does not, therefore, follow that children were not of old, and may not now be, baptized without them. Before men and women can enter the kingdom of glory, repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of heart, are absolutely required. But this cannot hold true in the case of infants or children, leaving the world before they have known good or evil, or have become practical or actual transgressors of the laws of God. If it were not so, then all departed little ones, though the offspring of the most holy parents on the earth, must undoubtedly perish for ever—a thought too dreadful to be entertained by any but demons in human form. We all know that, as a general rule, practical holiness, or a conversation becoming the gospel, are required of adult believers, before they can enter heaven. This doctrine is plain and positive. But the Saviour graciously dispenses with the enforcement of this law in the case of persons converted at the eleventh hour, or on a bed of death, or who, like the thief on the cross, expire immediately after their regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Our considerate Father in glory does not reap where he has not sown; nor deny his blessings



to the redeemed and the renewed in heart, because some of them may be necessarily destitute of the capacity or power to comply with all the claims rigidly enforced on other persons capable of fulfilling them. Nor will he refuse privileges to infants because they are not in the condition of adults, to understand and duly to appreciate their value.

What high moral attainments were necessary to the male children of the Hebrews, prior to their being circumcised, when but eight days old? Besides, nothing can be plainer than the fact, that many, if not most, of the adult Israelites—before their baptism unto Moses—had made but very small attainments in religious knowledge and true holiness; and yet this deficiency was no preventive to their being baptized by God himself. Exceptions, no doubt, existed; but, certainly, the after conduct of the Hebrews, then twenty years old and upwards, shows, that few of them had much spiritual information in their heads, or much love to God in their hearts. Their practice and punishment soon after, as Moses and Paul assure us, fully confirm the fact of their gross ignorance and their great depravity.

The Hebrews were not initiated into the school or church of Moses *because* of their past high mental attainments, but in order to become wise under his future instruction. The like may be said of their piety. They were not baptized *because* they were righteous, but to be thereby inducted formally to a system of divine ordinances, that thereby they might afterwards become so. The chief, if not the exclusive, qualification of these people, for this great baptism, was a belief, based on their recollection of the Egyptian plagues, that Moses was sent of God to deliver them out of the hand of Pharaoh, and that by following him, they should attain religious benefits, national liberty, and, at length, enjoy great prosperity and happiness, in the good land to which they were travelling. Surely, the mere want of knowledge with the innocence of children must be deemed as good a moral qualification for their reception of baptism, as most of their unconverted parents had hitherto attained.

In truth, we think, few will question, that the ordinance of baptism is never so profaned and prostituted by the baptism of children, belonging even to the most ignorant and ungodly parents, as it is by that of unconverted adults, and of which latter, it is confessed, that great numbers are immersed every year by our opponents. It may be here subjoined, that the knowledge which the believers at Corinth possessed, of the



doctrines, duties, and blessings of the gospel, prior to their baptism, must have been extremely limited. 'Paul was 'pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was 'Christ. . . . And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue 'believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the 'Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. . . . And' [after this] 'he continued there a year and six months, teaching 'the word of God among them.' Acts xviii. 5, 8, 11. Their faith, prior to baptism, embraced only the great truth, that Jesus was the promised Messiah; which few, in this country, except Jews, deny. Their instruction in religion came afterwards; just as the Hebrews were first baptized unto Moses, and then taught the laws of God; and just in the order the communion of Christ enjoins—'baptize and teach.'

Then, in reference to the AGE which persons must attain before they ought to be baptized. How is this to be determined, and who is to judge in the matter? What period in rising life would our objector fix on as the minimum for receiving this sacrament? Is it replied, not under twenty? But why fix on that age, since the Scriptures have fixed on none? Why not under fifteen? And, if so, why not under twelve, ten, eight, and so downward to a week old? For what reasons, or on what divine authority, are we to be arrested in our sliding scale of time? The eighth day after birth was appointed for circumcision; why not for baptism? If that period were late enough for one initiatory rite, why not, without some scriptural prohibition, for both?—especially as our chief opponents admit that, in purport, these ordinances were substantially the same, and even were administered at the same time. To urge that the candidates must be old enough to exercise faith and exemplify holiness beforehand, is irrelevant to our immediate question, which is simply concerning the *age* of the candidate for baptism. It is manifest that being descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the line of the promise, or having, through divine mercy become, in purpose, proselytes to the laws of Moses; or being associated with Israel, like 'the mixed multitude,' who came with them out of Egypt, qualified them all, both old and young, male and female, for the privileges and responsibilities of the great national baptism in the Red Sea.

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[While adverting to the *age* of persons that might be baptized, a passing suggestion to some of our *Pedobaptist* friends, may not be altogether needless or out of place. It not unfrequently

occurs, that the baptism of children is deferred for months and even for years, on no other ground, than that of an unaccountable procrastination. They intend to have it done shortly; and this good intention is cherished for an indefinite period—perhaps till the parents have two or three children to be consecrated to God at once. This certainly is not *infant* baptism, according to the usual import of the term. The result often is, that when such observant and excitable little folks are brought to the font, the strangeness of the ceremony, the novelty of the whole scene, and the apprehension of something unpleasant being done to them by the minister, occasion unruliness and noise—to the distress of their mothers, and the annoyance of all present. And though there is nothing in the scene half so painful as some nervous and timid adults frequently occasion, at their immersion under water; yet the opponents of Infant Baptism make a great deal out of it, and plead the children's crying as a presumptive argument against baby sprinkling.

Now, all or most of this might be avoided by baptizing children when very young; say, under a month or six weeks old, at least; or as soon as their maternal parents are well enough to accompany or carry them to the temple of God. It was, doubtless, for reasons akin to this, at least, in part, that God appointed the eighth day after birth for circumcising the little Hebrews, instead of the eighth month, or the eighth year. Let parents take this hint, and they will most probably save themselves much inconvenience, and unpleasant excitement. Young infants, in health and properly fed, are seldom noisy at the font; and the ceremony is mostly administered without the least disturbing incident. The Rev. Matthew Henry remarks, 'Baptism should not be carelessly deferred, 'as if it were a thing indifferent, whether it were done or not. 'It argues a contempt of the ordinance, and a slight regard 'to our children's covenant-right, to delay the administration, 'perhaps because the feast cannot be yet provided, or such a 'fine friend procured to stand gossip. Thus a solemn and 'important institution of Christ is often made to truckle to 'mean and inconsiderable respects. Moses' deferring to circumcise his child had like to have cost him dear.' p. 144.]

OBJECTION IV. *In Baptism all the subjects should be free, active, and make an intelligent profession of the religion to which they are inducted.*—'Infant Baptism,' says Mr. Noel, 'differs essentially from the baptism of believers. The believer 'is active in the reception of baptism, but the infant is passive;

'the believer asks for it as a privilege, the infant receives it 'without its consent; the one by it professes his faith, the 'other professes nothing. The baptism of the believer and 'the baptism of the infant are, therefore, two different baptisms, 'with different significations and different consequences; and 'both, therefore, to be lawful, must have a separate warrant 'from the Lord, since they are quite different institutions '—the precept which enjoins the one, rather by inference 'forbids the other.' *Sub.* p. 126. It is, therefore, assumed, that as the Hebrew children were not capable of making such a profession, they could not really have been baptized. But here again the objection is opposed to fact; for Paul declares they were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. As argued before, if freedom, activity, and intelligence were required in adults, it does not follow, that infants might not be baptized without such mental endowments. The dry dedication of the young to God, by our Baptist friends, has nothing VOLUNTARY in it, in respect of the children themselves; nor are the babies asked, if they would like to be thus disciplined to the Lord. When, moreover, they begin to teach them the true knowledge of the gospel, their infant will or choice is not consulted. Why then must there be a personal mental recognition and acquiescence in the one case and not in the other? When adult proselytes to Judaism were circumcised and baptized, the reception was voluntary; but this was not required in the case of their new-born children, who were confessedly associated with them in this ceremony.

Mr. Fleming observes, that 'We have an instance of baptism, 'applied, when the grown persons baptized, do seem to have 'been *mere* patients in the application of the rite.' Acts x. 47, 48. 'Peter does not ask them *their consent*, but inquires of 'his company, whether they had any objection to these Gentiles 'being baptized in the name of the Lord.' Here, we may notice the singular circumstance that, with the exception of the Ethiopian Eunuch—if it really be an exception—none of all the thousands baptized, after the Saviour's resurrection, ever applied for personal baptism. The three thousand on the day of Pentecost yielded to the persuasions of Peter, and were baptized. The Samaritans believing Philip were baptized; but are not said to have applied for baptism. Paul, complying with the request of Ananias, arose and was baptized. Lydia, the Jailor, and the Corinthians, believed and were baptized. But not a single instance, save the questionable one of the Eunuch, is recorded in which the parties themselves are said

to have solicited this rite at the hands of the apostles or their colleagues. They consented to undergo the ceremony, and submitted to the operation; but, apparently, did nothing more. Their meetness was determined by the ministers of Christ; and the administration was performed by them or their assistants, as the sole procurance and act of his faithful servants.

The case of the Eunuch renders it manifest, that, while Philip preached Christ to him, he, at the same time, explained the nature and necessity of water baptism unto Christ. In accordance with this, the Eunuch, who probably saw the water before Philip, merely said, 'see here is water,' what hinders me from being baptized at once, as you have suggested or enjoined. That the Ethiopian should have applied for baptism before the Deacon had stated its nature and necessity, is extremely improbable. Indeed, he does not directly apply for baptism at all. He merely acquiesces in Philip's proposal. So that this instance in no degree forms an exception to the statement, that people were solicited to be baptized, and that they did not apply for this rite. In the case of John's Baptism, and that of our Saviour's disciples, before he suffered, there appears to have been a difference. The people rushed to the herald and early followers of Christ, under the conviction, that a temporal kingdom was about to be established; the first advantages of which they were anxious to share. But even in these instances we have no record of any person soliciting baptism for himself. The people flocked to hear; were invited to submit to the rite; this they did; and this is all we are informed of on the subject.

It is insisted, that the baptized must be ACTIVE in baptism; meaning, that they must take a leading part in the performance—doing something themselves, as well as permitting something to be done to them. But why must they be more active than the children circumcised unto God, or baptized unto Moses, or dedicated to Christ in the vestry of a Baptist Chapel? Even an adult is no more active in the actual rite of baptism itself than a baby. He merely walks into the font instead of being carried; but that is not the baptism. In the act itself he is as passive as an infant; or as a man undergoing a surgical operation in a hospital. Something is done *with* him, or *to* him, and not *by* him. Who would argue that a patient is active while stretched on a table, undergoing the amputation of a fractured limb? And the adult, when baptized, is no more so. He consents to the deed, he submits to the operation by another; and that is the sum total of his activity



in the ceremony; as any one may readily learn by witnessing the rite of adult immersion. In truth, the officiating minister is the only acting agent in the matter of dipping, as he is in Infant Baptism by affusion.

Mr. Noel says, 'Infants must not be baptized because they 'are incapable of performing a religious act.' p. 55. First of all, the baptized adult really performs no act at all—he is merely acted upon. And, secondly, being taught to read the Scriptures, is as religious an act as submitting to be dedicated to God; but must not children be instructed, till they are old enough to take a part in teaching themselves the word of God? 'You will please to observe,' says Mr. Stovel, 'that the act of 'baptism was *performed* in the name of the Father, Son and 'Holy Ghost, performed (I say) by *both* parties—*administered* 'by the church, and received by the candidates.' *Regen. Lect.* ii. p. 10. He might have as correctly asserted that an act of charity was performed by both parties—when he gave Peggy Brown half-a-crown, and she received it with a very genteel courtesy, and put it into her pocket!

It is further asserted, that INTELLIGENCE in the subject is essential to baptism. But, we again inquire, why so in this rite any more than in infant circumcision among the Jews, the baptism of children unto Moses, or the dry dedication of children by our opponents? Besides, what amount of religious knowledge did the adult portion of 'Our Fathers' possess when they were baptized in the Red Sea? When Abraham, the same day that God commanded him, circumcised every male born in his house or bought with money, and who must have amounted to upwards of a thousand persons, what large portion of intelligence on the subject of circumcision to Jehovah, could any of them have obtained. Gen. xvii. 3. Even those adults, baptized by John and the disciples of Christ, could have had only the most imperfect understanding of the gospel. The extent of the information of most of them was only, that the coming, or the crucified Saviour, was the promised Messiah, and that by baptism they would become, and be recognized as, his disciples. Witsius justly observes, 'Nor, at the beginning of Christianity, was any profession of 'faith required from those to whom baptism was about to be 'administered, except a simple declaration that they believed 'in Christ, or in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; 'as appears from the baptism of the converts mentioned in the 'Acts of the Apostles.' Such a profession of faith, most assuredly, would not satisfy any of our strict Baptist brethren.



In the case of the baptized families, mentioned in the New Testament, whatever information the parent or master might have obtained, in a very short time, we can hardly imagine the children and domestics to have advanced far in divine knowledge, before they were consecrated to Christ—the same day, or the same hour!

It may be material to our argument to remark, that many persons became believers in Christ, not after obtaining a full and detailed exposition of the doctrines, duties, and promises, of the gospel; but from simply witnessing, or hearing of, the miracles wrought by Christ or his apostles. This was the case of Nathaniel. John i. 43-51. The people of Samaria believed, because Jesus told the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, all that ever she did. John iv. 39. Many of the Jews believed on seeing Lazarus raised from the dead. John xi. 41-45. The like result took place at Joppa, on the restoration of Dorcas to life. Acts ix. 41, 42. Now, if these believers were immediately baptized—which is highly probable—they underwent this ceremony without any extensive instruction in the doctrines and claims of the gospel dispensation. This, too, would have been in accordance with the Saviour's commission—Proselyte, Baptize, and Teach;—and also in agreement with the practice of the apostles in general, who, at once, baptized all they could induce to believe that Jesus was the Christ. The case of Paul himself is fully illustrative of this doctrine. Acts ix. 17, 18. Of him, Mr. Stovel says, 'Paul 'went down into the water of baptism' [Qy?] 'a reputed 'Jewish Persecutor; but he came up out of the water, an 'avowed Christian!' Regen. Lec. iii. p. 19. The instance of the Corinthian converts, we have mentioned before. They were baptized, and became recognized disciples of Christ, in all probability, like the three thousand, on the same day.

When we say disciples, of course we mean scholars, pupils, or students, in the schools of Christianity—where most of them, after being baptized, had to learn nearly all things comprehended under the term Christian knowledge. A summary of the details of revelation, not professedly taught the first converts, previous to their reception of this initiatory or dedicatory ordinance, but which they were to learn afterwards, would constitute an extensive compilation. Assuming that the Bodies of Divinity and Confessions of Faith, published by Ridgley, Gill, Dwight, Watson, the Assembly of Divines and other eminent writers, comprehend 'The Knowledge which a 'Christian Man' ought to obtain; and comparing the contents

of their expositions with what John the Baptist, and the Saviour's apostles, taught the candidates for this sacrament, before administering it to them; it would be found that not more than a fiftieth part of the details, comprehended in the usual systems of scriptural theology, were given before baptism—leaving the other forty-nine parts to be communicated to them subsequently. This statement will hold true especially in reference to converts from heathenism, who had not previously possessed or perused the contents of the Old Testament. I do not vouch for the precise proportions just stated; but I believe that it would, on inquiry, be found not far from the facts of the case. So much for the great intelligence necessary in candidates previous to baptism, in apostolic times, and, by fair deduction, in our own also.

An American writer says, 'It has often been asserted by our brethren, and that with much confidence, that little children being incapable of being taught, cannot be made disciples; nay, that discipleship necessarily implies not only a capacity of instruction, but actual previous instruction. But is this assertion true? I acknowledge that the term disciple has a relation to instruction: but it by no means implies universally, that he who is called a disciple must have been previously instructed. A disciple is one who puts himself, or who is put by others, under the authority of a teacher. The word applies equally to both cases. We agree that of adults, no longer under the control of parents, no person can be called a disciple of Christ without a profession of faith in him as the Messiah, and of subjection to his authority. But what has this to do with the reception of children as his disciples? How does it oppose their admission into his school, that they may be taught in future? Is it fair reasoning, that because adults are not to be received without a profession of voluntary subjection to Christ, therefore, children, incapable of making such profession, are to be excluded? I think not. But I go further, and observe that there is a text in the New Testament, where little children are manifestly called disciples, &c. Acts xv. 10.' *Pamphleteer*, p. 33.

I must not omit to notice the logic of Mr. Noel, in the paragraph cited at the beginning of this objection. Because the believer asks for baptism, is active in it, and professes faith before it—which a child cannot be or do;—he infers that the baptism of a believer and of an infant are two different baptisms, with different significations, and different conse-

quences; requiring separate warrants from the Lord; and that the validity of the one forbids the other. Apply this to another divine institution. Suppose the men of Abraham's household to have been active in their own circumcision, to have solicited the rite, and to have professed their faith in the covenant—none of which their little baby boys did or could have done;—were there, consequently, two different circumcisions, with different significations, and different consequences? were they different institutions, having separate warrants? and did the circumcision of the men, 'rather by inference forbid,' the circumcision of the children? If Mr. Noel can discover a flaw in this rejoinder, he has more penetration than I profess to exercise. Further, were the circumcision and baptism of a heathen proselyte, of sound mind and holy purpose, different institutions and acts, from the circumcision and baptism of his little boys? for the latter of which there should be a distinct warrant; or should not be done!

A young man of twenty applies at a Sabbath School for the privilege of studying under some godly teacher! And mamma also takes her little child there, to be placed in the infant class. Must the master get a different warrant for attending to these different duties? and does teaching the young man, 'rather by inference, forbid' his teaching the young child? There was but one passover, and men, women, and children partook of it. There is but 'One Faith, one Lord, one Baptism;' one creed for all to believe, one God for all to worship, one Baptism of the Holy Ghost, which, it is admitted, elect infants, as well as adults, experience. If different ages, activities, and professions constitute really different baptisms, what objection can our opponents have to our calling the dipping of regenerate men, and the dipping of hypocrites, different baptisms; requiring different warrants; the one, rather by inference, forbidding the other? And yet these gentlemen regard both the dippings as but one baptism, equally valid and lasting. As for baptizing the hypocrite again, on his real conversion, it is out of the question. 'The Baptists have 'been charged with anabaptism, a sentiment and practice which 'they detest, as much as any of their opposers.' Booth v. 2. p. 97.—By the way, as I believe, I have elsewhere proved, that dipping in baptism never was practised under the law, or during the apostolic age; I conclude that dipping is not baptism now; and that, therefore, our Immersionist brethren cannot be designated *Anabaptists*; from the simple fact, that dipping is not baptizing at all. Nor will they deem this

doctrine more uncharitable than their own declaration, That pouring, affusing, or sprinkling, is not baptism at all!

[I must here respectfully notice a practice which, I believe, prevails among some PEDOBAPTIST MISSIONARIES, among the heathen—of keeping, persons proselyted to Christianity, under a long system of tuition, before baptizing them—requiring not simply a knowledge of the leading truths of the Gospel—as that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, and that men must trust his word, mercy, and death, in order to be saved from hell and raised to glory—but also of the various doctrines, duties, privileges, and obligations of genuine Christians. Where such a course is pursued, the Saviour's commission, and the apostolic rule of action, are certainly not followed. Some of our excellent missionaries go even beyond this, and wait for decided evidence of genuine conversion of heart to Christ, before they administer this rite to them; after which they at once introduce them into their spiritual communion, as full and perfect members of it. Thus baptism is placed rather at the end, than at the commencement, of a Christian education. It is proselyting, teaching, and baptizing, instead of proselyting, baptizing, and teaching, as enjoined by our Lord. It is pursuing a course abroad which, as Pedobaptists, we avoid at home; and adopting a practice which we earnestly object to by our opponents. As soon as persons are made willing to become disciples of divine truth, and to submit to the pleasure of the Lord; they are entitled to baptism, and then to that regular and systematic teaching which, under God, will qualify them to enter the select society of the saints of Christ. Caution and prudence may possibly dictate a postponement of the rite of baptism under certain circumstances. But, as the rule of Scripture is plain in this case, to observe it appears the wiser and better plan.]

OBJECTION V. *The Hebrew children that passed through the sea, might have been baptized by proxy*—their parents being their representatives in this great national purification. —Of such a baptismal substitution, Paul says not a word, either in our text or any where else; nor should we have referred to such an objection, except under the impression that some one might have entertained and adduced it against our conclusions. When Mr. Rees, in a passage previously quoted, contends, that by the terms, 'Our Fathers,' the elders of Israel, or the heads of families only, were included, he assumes, that they themselves only were baptized; and that the children were not baptized at all, actually or virtually, personally or by



proxy. That his assumptions are untenable, we believe, has been rendered clear and unquestionable. The present objection supposes that all were virtually, or, in effect, baptized, though the parents only underwent the ceremony, or were personally baptized. But the language of the Apostle clearly proves, that the entire '*Jewish people*,' male and female, old and young, were alike baptized unto Moses. The men were not baptized for their children any more than for their wives, who, as previously seen, are no more expressly mentioned than their little ones. It is indisputably a principle of the divine procedure, in God's dealings with his creatures, and especially with professed disciples of the truth, that none, however young, shall have that done for them that they can do for themselves; nor shall others undergo for them what they themselves have the capacity of personally undergoing. In circumcision, Abraham did not become a substitute for his male children and servants; because they were capable of being circumcised equally with himself. But the infant females of his household, because incapable of receiving this sign of the covenant, were, through their intimate relation to the males, interested in its privileges and obligations, equally with their fathers and brethren. It is never said that females were circumcised, but merely implied that they were a part of a circumcised nation, and were to enjoy the blessings and bear their share of the responsibilities, of the entire people. It might as reasonably be supposed, that parents should be baptized with the Holy Ghost for their offspring, as that they should be baptized with water for them.

In the case of baptism, there certainly is no physical difficulty in respect of infants any more than in that of adults; nor, if dipped, a twentieth part as much; and the necessity of representation, as in the case of circumcision, could not exist in the case of Infant Baptism. If parental baptism would have answered for the offspring in the Red Sea, it would have answered at the Jordan and in Jerusalem; and would answer still; and then all children, whose parents or adult predecessors have been baptized, must be deemed virtually baptized, and be treated as such by the churches of Christ, to the end of time. If this doctrine were admitted, then none would require personal baptism, whose remotest ancestors had undergone this rite; for to be virtually baptized amounts to the same thing as being really baptized. On this principle, every descendant of the first person, converted from Judaism or heathenism, and baptized into Christianity, would, in effect,



be baptized, as soon as it was born; and baptism must cease in all instances, excepting in those of children whose forefathers had never undergone this ceremony. This is the doctrine of Anti-baptists, with whom we are not contending, and not of our opponents, who believe in the personal and perpetual obligation of baptism in the Christian church. We never hear of a parent, Baptist or Pedobaptist, asserting that his children have been baptized in his baptism; and thereby entitled to all the advantages, and laid under all the obligations, to which he himself had been raised or subjected by this ceremony. It may be added, that as neither wives nor women are said to have been baptized in the Red Sea; it might be argued, that the baptism of adult males might be equally available for the female sex; as in the case of circumcision; and that now the latter may be considered baptized by proxy. To this, I opine, our opponents would not readily agree!

Baptism is confessedly a personal affair. And so were all other ancient rites, of which children are capable. When young persons, of any age, became individually and ceremonially polluted, the purification of themselves was doubtlessly administered, and not of their parents. Some religious acts are relative—your duty to others; and some are personal—what you must do or experience yourselves. It might as justly be argued, that parents ate the manna and drank of the rock for their children, as that they were baptized for them; or that the male infants in Abraham's house were not circumcised—that rite having been administered to their fathers instead. Parents may devote their children to God in baptism; but they cannot be baptized in their room. They may bring their dependent families into covenant relationships and obligations; but they cannot be personally religious for them. They may teach their children, but they cannot be learned, any more than converted, for them. 'No man,' says Mr. Eaton, 'can be a Christian by proxy, any more than he can be a wise and good man by proxy, or than he can be saved by proxy.' p. 184. If by the words, 'Our Fathers,' adult males only were meant, they only were the actual subjects of this great administration; and as every Israelite, who passed through the sea, was virtually baptized; then, as before remarked, for aught the words literally declare to the contrary, all the wives, mothers, and young women, who came out of Egypt, must have been baptized by proxy, as much as the children and infants among them. But this is what no intelligent person will accredit.

This baptism in the sea bound all its subjects in a covenant to cleave to God, to love and obey him all the days of their lives. In a passage, to be cited more at length hereafter, the Rev. Mr. Stovel says, 'From that moment'—after passing the sea—'they were under God in the hands of Moses. By 'his means, they received their direction, defence, and subsistence. He was their anointed ruler, called in one place 'their Christ. Under his government they were called to 'glorify the God of their fathers, either in the blessedness 'which resulted from obedience, or in the punishment which 'was due for their rebellion.' Now, it is plain, that when the children, baptized in the sea, became men and women, or responsible agents, in the wilderness, they could be neither obedient nor rebellious by proxy, but only in their own persons; and, in their own persons only, could they enjoy the blessedness, or endure the punishment, arising from keeping or breaking this baptismal covenant. If they were not all personally baptized, they were not all personally involved in the responsibilities of this engagement—their proxies in the water would be still their proxies in the wilderness. The exceptions in the rite, would be equally exceptions in the subsequent obligations to submit to, and be bound by, this covenant.

But all the people—fathers, mothers, and children—were rewarded or chastised alike in their own individual capacities. Not the slightest intimation is afforded in the narratives of the after doings and fate of the Hebrews, that the heads of families only were benefitted by keeping their baptismal engagement, or punished for its violation. Nor do we ever read, that when the infants, who had passed through the sea, had attained the age of majority or accountability, they pleaded exemption from the like obligations as their parents, by urging that they were not personally bound by precisely the like baptismal covenant—not having been personally baptized unto Moses. Neither is there any record given us of the initiatory baptism of the babes who passed through the sea being administered when they had become men and women, on the ground that they were not really and properly baptized with their parents, and must therefore receive this rite in after years, to place them on an equality with their fathers and mothers, who were adults when they came out of Egypt. The initiatory rite of the tiniest infant was as complete, for all church purposes, as that of the highest and holiest saint in the Israelitish camp. They were therefore doubtlessly baptized in their own proper persons.

OBJECTION VI. *There is something too puerile in baby baptism to have been administered by Jehovah himself in the Red Sea.*—Mr. Eaton says, Infant Baptism ‘is unauthorized by Scripture—*utterly puerile*—incapable of all benefit to a child—no direct historical evidence of its observance till several centuries after the introduction of Christianity.’ p. 192. Mr. Gibbs predicts, that ‘the time must soon come when Pedobaptist Dissenters will see the *absurdity* of their system, and when they will explode Infant Baptism.’ p. 31. Byron asks, ‘What men can possibly mean when they sprinkle children just brought into natural life, with water, and call it baptism, in which state there is no possibility of spiritual existence being evinced or known?’ p. 14. But a ceremony may be even great and glorious, not from the objects acted upon, nor from the mode of its administration; but from the dignity of the agent, and the design of the operation. The creation of an insect or of a worm is not a trifling affair in the estimation of God, or of the glorious angels, who better appreciate his creative wisdom and power; though it may seem so in the imagination of foolish and inconsiderate mortals. If we look at the baptism of adults, without recognizing the Being at whose command it was done, and the end he had in view in the ceremony, it would appear just as puerile as that of sprinkling little children—and, if done by dipping, much more unseemly. What could appear more unmeaning than infant circumcision; the various sprinklings under the law; the distinguishing ceremonies of Jewish worship; or the sacrificing of animals—if you leave Jehovah and his covenants of justice and mercy out of the question? ‘A Baptist was once asked, if he would not have thought it ridiculous to have seen an unconscious babe circumcised; to which he replied, “I certainly should;” and yet this was a positive institute; an ordinance of God’s appointment.’ *Dewhurst*, p. 184. Even the Lord’s Supper, if witnessed without maturely considering its designs and associations, presents nothing imposing to the cool philosophical observer. To proud and haughty infidels, singing the praises of God, calling on his name, and even preaching the gospel, are matters below their serious consideration. When any religious service is viewed abstractedly, or with aversion, it is generally the object of supercilious regard.

A little consideration would soon satisfy any thoughtful mind, that infants are not only more innocent than adults, but of equal importance in the scale of human life; and their

consecration to God as momentous an affair as that of a prince, a sage, or a giant. A young man of twenty is of more social importance than an old man of eighty. In the babe we possibly see the father or mother of thousands, whose destiny, in a great degree, depends, under the divine blessing, upon its own spiritual training. In the infant are the elements of the Christian, the preacher, or the martyr. Every noble, priest, hero, and prophet in Israel, from forty to fifty years of age, on first entering Canaan—save Caleb and Joshua—was baptized an infant or a child, in the Red Sea. In children is implicated all the importance of their parents; they have the like spirit, the like relation to God, and similar elements of goodness, greatness, and immortality. Even the children of the hired servant and the sojourner are claimed as God's servants, who must not be ruled over with rigour, but with kindness. Lev. xxv. 40-43. For the salvation of infants the Saviour lived and died as much as for the first adults in the world. In those little ones, who are carried from their cradles to the grave, the Holy Spirit as graciously operates as in full-grown men and women. Over the babes of the earth God is as watchful, and in their happiness as much interested, as in that of their parents. For them there is the same heavenly homes, with all its joys and glories, as for his redeemed people of riper age. And if it be the will of Heaven to baptize them, we are bound to comply, though it be performed by simply affusing or sprinkling them; and though this ceremony may not excite the same general curiosity, bustle and no-ration as an adult immersion. But to this objection we may have occasion to recur hereafter.

OBJECTION VII. *Infant baptism is too pernicious a rite to have been administered by Jehovah or to have been enjoined upon us.*—Here again the objection is in opposition to facts, and can, therefore, have no force against existing duty. But still it is deeply felt by many sincere, though mistaken, disciples of Christ; and under the influence of such an impression, they oppose us with astonishing zeal and perseverance. *Some of them* would feel all but shocked at finding themselves present at a baby-sprinkling; and dare not sit down at the Lord's table with persons confessedly favourable to this rite. Being a party, it becomes a prominent question, and is mooted more frequently, and with much more fervency, than many others of inconceivably greater moment.

For the sheer purpose of opposing Infant Baptism more effectually, many Baptists separate themselves from Pedobaptist



congregations, in which they have long worshipped, and where the grace of God may have first reached their hearts; and set up new Baptist interests in the same small towns and villages, merely as rivals to those they have just forsaken. To maintain their opposition to Infant Baptism—for on this question they alone are the aggressors—they employ the hottest phraseology, enunciate the oddest reasons, and leave no means unattempted, to increase their party, and to gain it support from the ranks of the timid, misguided, and poor deluded, Pedobaptists! Not a few of their ministers are frequently accused of assiduously endeavouring to gain a footing in Pedobaptist families, and ingratiating themselves into their favour, in order, when an opportunity offers, to get them under water. Of this, many of our ministerial brethren loudly and, I believe, too justly complain. The press constantly sends forth its books, pamphlets, and tracts, against Infant Baptism; and many agents are industriously occupied in secretly circulating them among the less enlightened and confirmed of our congregations; while the pulpit pours out its most ardent and eloquent harangues in condemnation of our practice. We are pitied for our want of common sense, are charged with a sad deficiency of physical courage, and gravely rebuked for a lack of religious integrity.

So vital, in the view of the Baptists, at large, is this question, that it has caused a separation of the Calvinistic Congregational body into two sections; and, in not a few instances, has, unhappily, excited a spirit of rife and perpetual alienation among them. This repugnance of our opponents to Infant Baptism is strikingly exemplified in their generally refusing to assist Pedobaptists in erecting or repairing their places of worship. Though constantly urging, and frequently inducing, our body to help them in similar efforts; comparatively few of them will return the compliment. This want of reciprocal aid is felt and complained of by nearly all those Pedobaptist ministers, whose arduous and self-denying duty it is to solicit assistance towards promoting their local endeavours to save the souls of the people. All this opposition evidently arises from a settled aversion to Infant Baptism—which, for the world, they would not knowingly countenance or encourage in the smallest degree, or in the most indirect way. Of course, I speak not of all our opponents, but certainly of the great majority of their competent members.

Again, let a person write a tract, pamphlet, or volume, in defence of Infant Sprinkling, and let him do it with zeal, and some degree of efficiency; and if he escape the rudest demon-



strations of dislike, from the great mass of the Baptist communions he may happen to fall in with, it must arise from some peculiarity in his position and circumstances—shielding him from their open attacks. Every thing is done to traduce his talents, intelligence, and motives, and, if possible, to annoy him personally. He is viewed as the enemy of the dipping denomination, and of every individual in it. Let him, perchance, get into the company of a dozen of them, and the looks he will encounter, and the remarks to which he will be subjected, must soon convince him of being accused of having committed some fearfully grave offence! Let him solicit their aid, even for some object of general interest; and, a hundred to one, but he will not only get a refusal, but also a castigation for presuming to differ from themselves on the matter of baptism, and for having the audacity to publish his thoughts on it. They will sneer at his performance, pronounce it trash, profane, absurd, worthless, and its arguments, as having been answered a hundred times over! As a specimen, the Rev. Samuel Green, speaking to his congregation of my volume on the Mode of Baptism, which has been strongly sanctioned and recommended by the leading Pedobaptist reviews, calls it, ‘An ignorant, conceited, and flippant book’—of course, not worth their notice, nor entitled to their belief! Address, p. 5. Now, this is not dignified nor Christian; and rather betrays a weakness and soreness, than a calm conviction, that their cause is invulnerable. The strong can afford to be merciful. In this light every intelligent Pedobaptist regards such pettish hostility to himself and his productions; and naturally assuming, with some small amount of gratification, that his efforts have made an impression in the right quarter. The most zealous and unscrupulous opponents of Infant Baptism, I venture to affirm, never meet with such treatment from its most ardent advocates.

The importance our opponents attach to what they believe to be the right administration of baptism, compared with some other scriptural obligations, is remarkable. In relation to *Doctrines*; our Calvinistic, Antinomian, and Arminian friends, differing most widely in the celebrated Five Points, which have so long and so deeply agitated the Christian world, can write themselves down as if constituting only one affiliated and identical section of believers. In the same list, they publish the numbers of their conflicting churches, with the increase or decrease of their members. As for baby-sprinklers, Calvinistic, or Arminian, they must be repudiated and opposed

on every hand, as in grievous and dangerous error, and as ever doing a world of mischief! Many of their advocates will admit of no difference between the religious and moral tendencies of baptism as administered in a Catholic or in a Wesleyan chapel! I could easily quote pages from the writings of our learned and loudly-applauded opponents, in confirmation of this assertion. It is urged, that just as papists and conformists, in baptizing infants, teach the fearful doctrine of baptismal regeneration; so all other sections of the church must, and and always, do the like, verbally or by inference, whenever they baptize children.

Then, in relation to the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper, if we may judge from the language of our opponents, they are far more concerned about the due administration of Baptism, both as to the mode and the subject, than about the scriptural observance of the Eucharist. They seldom urge pious people to attend the Lord's Supper with half the earnestness they manifest in persuading others, of very doubtful godliness, to submit to immersion. Nor is the neglect of the former ordinance half as much reprov'd or condemned as a neglect of the latter. More value and virtue appear associated with the due observance of the ceremony in the water, than the ceremony at the Christian altar. How seldom do you read of our opponents castigating people for not receiving the Lord's Supper, or doing so in a careless frame of mind, or in an unscriptural posture—kneeling instead of sitting—or in quietly listening to the most exceptional language? These are matters, doubtless, not approved; but the evils seem to be nothing compared with the imperfect or improper administration of baptism. They will commune, by the year, with very doubtful immersionists at the Lord's table, and seldom, or never utter a complaint. But, let a person take his place there, of whose proper baptism they entertain a doubt, and they are ready, in an instant, to express their dislike at being so near him; and indeed they feel he ought not to be allowed there at all—at least this would be the case with most of our Baptist brethren. All this, and more of the like kind might be truly added, indubitably evinces the transcendent importance our opponents attach to this rite, evidently far more than was ever ascribed to it by the apostle Paul, and also their hostility to Infant Baptism, administered even in its simplest form.

In order to offer the best apology in my power for this hostile feeling and conduct of so many of our opponents, I will, for the present, assume that it originates in a serious

belief, that in administering the rite to infants, we really, knowingly, and necessarily, teach the doctrine of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION; or, that this soul-deluding sentiment must always and inevitably be the consequence of its administration; and that few errors are so sinful and dangerous as this. In confirmation of that assumption, I will cite a few passages from the writings of some of the most lauded and popular antagonists of Infant Baptism. Mr. Keach:—"The doctrine of Pedobaptism is a direct violation of that holy precept of our blessed Lord, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.'" Theophilus:—"What then is Infant Baptism, whether as practised in the Establishment or out of it, but a work of supererogation, a wily artifice of Anti-christ, whereby to usurp the kingdom of God?" p. 5. Byron:—"Is not Infant Baptism an invention of men? Is it not the source whence the mass of carnal schemes have sprung? Is it not the sheet anchor of delusion that holds the whole mass in such system together? And, lastly, is it not the very foundation of all apostasy from the truths of the gospel?" Jenkins:—"O Sir! the ignorant people, as they are deemed, of the Church of England, are not in half so much danger, as the demure and regular amongst the dissenters, of being deceived here, and trusting to the outside of religion, without the inward reality?" p. 82. Pengelly:—"Presbyterians, Independents, Congregationalists, and Wesleyans, hold doctrines like those of the Churches of Greece, Rome, and England, on the virtues of baptism, or which, carried out, lead to consequences little short of those communions." p. 77. Draper heads a section of his work with the following question:—"Is not the practise of Infant Sprinkling ruinous to the souls of men?" And then proceeds to persuade his readers, that the Assembly of Divines, the Rev. Philip Henry, and his son, the Commentator, Drs. Doddridge, Williams, and Watts, held Infant Baptism to be a saving ordinance! p. 14-23. Craps:—"Whatever may be the form of words used by the minister, in connexion with the ceremony of baptizing Infants, it cannot be denied that the *tendency* of the ceremony is to teach that infants are *saved by baptism*. Nor can it be doubted that the salvation of infants by baptism is a doctrine very generally believed in this country, not merely by Episcopalians, but by the Wesleyans and Independents." p. 76. Noel:—"So long as Infant Baptism continues to be practised, this "gross superstition," this mighty mischief, [baptismal regeneration]

'must continue; because it springs necessarily from the application of scriptural statements respecting the baptism of believers, to the baptism of infants; and while Infant Baptism lasts, there being only one baptism enacted by Christ, they must be so applied.' *Sub.* p. 289.

In the above citations we have some curious and reckless specimens of logical deductions. Let us apply their mode of reasonings to themselves and their own practice. The churches of the Greeks, Romans, and of England, *whenever they baptize adults*, always teach the awful delusions of Baptismal Regeneration; therefore, whoever baptizes adults, do, either by implication or by direct declarations, teach this doctrine also! And while adult baptism lasts, this fearful evil must continue among its advocates. In truth, the great sticklers for believers' baptism are, consciously or not, promoting this system of evil and mischief in the world. It is in vain for them to protest against our attributing such errors and evils to them all and alike; or to aver that, though the Greek, Romish, and English hierarchies hold and teach Baptismal Regeneration, in every adult baptism, they themselves do nothing of the kind; and are certain, that their mode of administering this ordinance is exempt from such shocking and antisciptural consequences. No, they all baptize adults—that is sufficient; and they are all alike doing incalculable mischief, whenever they perform this rite!—I leave it with any reasonable person to decide, whether my deductions, from their Adult Baptism, are not as well-founded, and as fairly drawn, as those our opponents draw from our baptizing Infants!

Here you will notice Mr. Noel's distinction between the effects of Adult and Infant Baptism. It evinces the difficulties our assailants feel while making the above-cited serious charges against our principles and practices in this matter. 'Infant Baptism also mainly sustains the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; for those who are rightly baptized, are "buried and risen with Christ," Col. ii. 12; have "put on Christ," Gal. iii. 27; and "baptism saves them," 1 Pet. iii. 21; and if infants are rightly baptized, it follows that they are buried with Christ, have put on Christ, and are saved. Hence it is argued, that baptism must regenerate and justify them. Adult converts are regenerated by grace, and justified by faith, before baptism,' [what, every one of them?] 'and if baptism is said in Scripture to do this, it is only as being an external manifestation of faith,' [or of hypocrisy!] 'it is the faith



‘signified, and not the external sign, that saves. But infants ‘have not faith; and if baptism saves *them*, it is not faith ‘which saves them, but the external rite.’ *Mode*, p. 15. In this paragraph we are told, that Infant Baptism always and necessarily teaches Baptismal Regeneration; and that Adult Baptism, without exception, produces a contrary impression. The reason assigned for the latter conclusion is, that adults are always regenerated before they are immersed—and that this immersion is a clear manifestation, that they had faith before-hand, in consequence of their previous regeneration by the Holy Spirit!

But, suppose these adults should not have been spiritually baptized, what does this ceremony then teach? surely, as great and dangerous an error as it could do in the case of infants—supposing baby-baptism were considered a soul-regenerating service! But the texts above-cited do not say, baptism manifests that the parties *had been* ‘buried with Christ,’ or had ‘put on Christ,’ or had ‘been saved,’ before hand; but plainly and unequivocally, that baptism itself, did all this, or that it was done at the same time with the baptism itself. Does water baptism effect this object? If not, it does nothing, but what might be much more effectually accomplished by a holy life, and devotion to the cause of Christ. If Mr. Noel’s logic were true, it would follow, that nearly half the people our opponents dip were made to manifest a falsehood, and to become the awful dupes of a fearful delusion! I have cited his language to show the manifest perplexities into which our wisest and holiest antagonists plunge themselves, in order to evince their hostility to the baptism of infants! Think of the shocking delusions such a notion must foster in the minds of the baptized adults, without exception—we were all ‘buried ‘with Christ—have all put on Christ—are all saved;’ and our dipping is the seal and manifestation of this soul-cheering truth—as the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Noel unequivocally assures us!

It is hardly to be doubted, that owing to such positive and reckless assertions, false representations, and reasonings, as those cited from Byron, Craps, Draper, Noel, &c., and similar sentiments you will hereafter meet with in the course of this treatise, that many young, unread, and very imperfectly informed persons, among our opponents, so often and so positively denounce Infant Baptism, and its advocates. They regard those reverend guides as oracles; and feel they may, on all occasions, safely and confidently, use the language those gentlemen teach them. Indeed, in many cases they are more



dogmatical than their masters. The better versed in this controversy are constrained occasionally to make concessions exceedingly damaging to their own precited views, and which, in some instances, when duly followed out, are calculated to neutralize the entire force of their arguments. But few of the persons now referred to, have studied the real points of difference in this question; and most of them know surprisingly little about it. Yet they reiterate the foregoing declarations of their unscrupulous and incompetent guides, with all the dogmatic airs of conscious infallibility; treating the opinions and reasonings of their opponents with supercilious contempt. Nor, with such assertions before them, as I have just cited, from lauded and learned scribes of their own party, can one wonder at it.

We have solemnly, publicly, and repeatedly averred, that we teach neither directly, nor by fair inference, any such heretical doctrine as our opponents ascribe to us. Our administrations of this rite are open before the congregation and the world. And we challenge them to cite an instance in which any duly-recognized Independent or Wesleyan minister, fairly interpreted, has pronounced such dogmas as are perpetually ascribed to all Pedobaptists. A service more simple, innocent, or apparently and really inoffensive, cannot be performed by any minister of Christ. It is, in a few words, CONSECRATING, DEDICATING, OR DISCIPLING A CHILD TO THE TRIUNE GOD, AND FORMALLY INITIATING OR INTRODUCING IT INTO THE SCHOOL, CONGREGATION, OR TEACHINGS, OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH. *The mode in which we administer this rite is, by pronouncing over it the words of the commission, and by pouring or sprinkling pure water on its head, to symbolize and inculcate the necessity and mode of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.* This contains the sum of Infant Baptism, as to its design and form, among all evangelical dissenting Pedobaptists. No sponsors are present; no vows are taken; and no spiritual change of heart is even hinted at, as the result of this ceremony.

For employing the terms *dedicating, discipling, or consecrating*, as expressing the design of baptizing, we have the sanction of some of our intelligent opponents. The Rev. Mr. Norcott: 'I confess that many men do say the word 'Teach in the Greek is, make disciples, and I dare not say 'against it; for I find it the very practice of Jesus Christ; 'he did first make disciples, and then baptized them. John iv. 1.' Mr. Stovel says, 'The Apostles were commanded to initiate 'the disciples; for *baptizein eis*, in such a connexion, means

‘to initiate.’ *Dis.* p. 193. ‘The nation was baptized, initiated ‘into Moses.’ *Ib.* p. 70. ‘The proselyte being initiated, he ‘became a debtor to do the whole law.’ *Ib.* ‘In the Christian ‘system, baptism is found exalted to the character of an ‘adequate initiation.’ p. 77. Mr. Noel says, ‘As in all these ‘places the phrase, “to be baptized unto the name” of any one ‘means to be dedicated by water baptism to the service of ‘any one, the similar phrase in the commission to the apostles, ‘must mean the same thing; and when Jesus said, baptize ‘them unto the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the ‘Holy Ghost, he meant, dedicate them by water baptism to ‘the service of the Triune God.’ *Sub.* p. 15. ‘To be baptized unto ‘Christ, or unto Moses, or unto Paul, means, to be his follower ‘or disciple, consecrated to his service.’ p. 34. ‘Immersion ‘unto the name of God means consecration to God; and the ‘words baptizing them unto the name of the Father, &c. means ‘consecrating them to the Triune God.’ p. 35. Of course, then, they were not the Lord’s professedly or by recognition before; that is, they were not regarded as his disciples or followers before their baptism! Nor is the idea of discipling to Christ, by baptism, one of recent application. Justin Martyr, who was born near the close of the first century, speaking of those who were then members of the congregation, says, ‘A part of these were sixty or seventy years’ old, and were ‘made disciples to Christ from their infancy.’ On this passage a judicious writer remarks, ‘Now, had some Jewish proselyte ‘father, speaking of his sons, affirmed, They were made Jews ‘in infancy, we should easily understand him.’ It is plain, that Justin means, they were disciplined to Christ, in the ordinance of baptism. Cyprian says, ‘The main thing in ‘baptism, in God’s sight, is the dedicating the person to God ‘in his gospel.’ *Wall.* v. iii. p. 118.

That this design of baptism is the leading one among evangelical dissenters, might be confirmed by numerous unexceptionable authorities. The subjoined will suffice:—Mends: ‘Every evangelical Pedobaptist will cordially acknowledge . . . ‘that the children of parents, professing their belief in the ‘doctrines of the gospel, who are baptized, are not on account ‘of the faith and piety of parents entitled to spiritual privileges, ‘and saving grace. But we assert . . . that the children of ‘such parents, thus early devoted to God, in the ordinance of ‘baptism, are by it admitted into external and visible covenant ‘with God; they are introduced into the school of Christ, to be ‘taught the first principles of the oracles of God, agreeably to the

‘express words and obvious meaning of the commission, given ‘to the apostles, by our Lord after his resurrection.’ p. 13.

Mr. Edwards remarks, ‘I view infants, when baptized, under ‘the notion of persons entered into a school; and, therefore, I ‘consider parents, pastors, deacons, and church members, at ‘large, as brought under an additional obligation to instruct ‘those children who are become scholars, as they become able ‘to learn, in the peculiar truths of the religion of Christ. ‘Viewing the matter in this light, it assumes an importance ‘exceedingly grand; and Infant Baptism is far from being ‘that unmeaning thing which it appears to be when the views ‘are extended no further than helpless infancy . . . . By taking ‘a view of circumcision, and of our Lord’s command to his ‘apostles to make disciples, scholars, or learners, of all nations ‘. . . . there appears not only a grandeur of design, but likewise ‘an exact symmetry in the different dispensations of God; I ‘mean that attention to the rising offspring, which had shown ‘itself in a former dispensation, and no doubt in all.’

This doctrine we are prepared to defend, as, at least, free from all superstition in itself, and against the supposition of any dangerous consequences legitimately arising from it. As to our making a saving ordinance of this rite, I will appeal to the candid statement of the late Dr. W. Newman, of Stepney College:—He says, ‘Whether baptism and regeneration be ‘synonymous and convertible terms is a question that may give ‘pain and trouble to the national establishment. Dissenters ‘in general’ [who certainly baptize infants] ‘have not much ‘concern with it.’ *Serm.* p. 24. For our practice we have the divine sanction and example, in the baptism of numerous infants and children in the Red Sea; and we believe also, of the inspired disciples of Christ, under the gospel dispensation; and we consequently and confidently infer, that it cannot now possibly be injurious to either infants or adults.

But had there been danger to the young in our baptizing and dedicating them to God, are not our opponents chargeable with being equally guilty in dedicating or discipling their children to the Lord? When they formally devote their little ones to Christ, as, I believe, most pious parents, among them do; what is meant by that solemn and interesting act? and what end is intended to be accomplished by it? Why, just the same as we purpose in our baptisms. Mr. Noel says, the children of Baptists are ‘dedicated to God,’ [similar to being baptized unto God,] ‘from their infancy, and trained in his ‘ways; they receive instruction and exhortation from their

'parents; they worship with believers and see Christian 'examples from childhood.' *Sub.* p. 277. The manner of this consecration we may gather from the following passage of Mr. Booth: 'Being sometimes requested by the parents 'of a new-born child, to unite with them in addressing the 'Father of all mercies, we comply. On which occasion we 'frequently read some portion of Scripture; give a word of 'exhortation to the parents respecting the education of their 'child, return thanks to the Giver of all good for the recent 'blessings bestowed on the family, and recommend the infant 'to God by earnest prayer.' Vol. ii. p. 343. How oddly the following passage, in Mr. Stovel's work, reads after the above declarations! The unbaptized 'child is made to feel his fearful 'association with the wicked until he becomes separated by 'actual conversion!' and evinces it by being immersed.—*Reg. Lect.* v. p. 25. I suppose he means, the dear little creature does not live at home, or cannot pertain to a Christian family!

In fact, pious Baptists avowedly give up their children to Jehovah; they place them under his gracious guidance; they pray for his protection; and for his spiritual blessings to rest upon them. Where this dedication is not publicly, ministerially, or formally done, it is virtually effected by the every-day prayers and devotions of all godly parents among them. As the result, they express their hope and belief, that the Lord will be their children's God, their Redeemer, and their constant friend. They beseech him to baptize them with his Holy Spirit, and thereby regenerate their youthful hearts. Having done all this, they consider that their children now professedly belong to Christ, are in his covenant, and must, therefore, be nursed and trained up especially for him; must be taught the doctrines of the gospel; and, as 'babes in Christ,' must be nourished with the sincere milk of the word; must have holy examples, constant watching, and daily admonitions to love and serve their heavenly Father. They feel that their children are thus formally separated from the outer world; are brought into the congregation of God; and must be treated as beings devoted and consecrated to him. In a word, they view them as nominal Christians, and separated from the heathen multitudes, and the open infidels around them. Now all, and even more than this must be included in the formal dedication of their children to Christ; otherwise the service has no meaning in it—the term no legitimate import—nor can any good end be accomplished by it,—being a mere senseless and useless act.

But if it be of any rational import, benefit, and force, it is



quite as dangerous to the souls of the young as Infant Baptism. Might not the same false hopes be based on it, and the same delusions follow it, as are ascribed to our ceremonial? Our opponents have a dry baptism, and we a wet one. For theirs they have neither precept nor example, under the gospel dispensation; for ours we have, at least, the instance of the Red Sea. They can produce no Scriptural record of any divinely-appointed method of formally consecrating infants to Jehovah, except by circumcision or baptism. Theirs is a human substitute for a Christian rite. Yet without any precedent or command, many, if not most, of the really godly parents among them would deem themselves as bad as infidels or heathens, were they not to follow our example to a great extent, and, in some form or other, consecrate their offspring to the Almighty, and initiate them into the general church or congregation of Christ. Why not add the element and complete the rite! Surely no great mischief could ensue from such a simple and divine addition to their own imperfect and unauthorised ceremony! And then we and they might constitute one body—might live in concord, and more efficiently benefit the world.

Dr. Ryland, remarks—‘To the baptism of infants, considered simply as expressive of their dedication to God, and ‘their parents’ desire that their children may be the Lord’s, we ‘only object, Who hath required this at your hands?’ p. 23. Here, the Doctor candidly admits the harmlessness of our practice, which is conceding much more than many of his brethren. As to our authority for it, we ask in return, ‘who ‘hath required it at your hands,’ to build chapels, preach from pulpits, formally dedicate your children to Christ, or to baptize young or old men and women who have been trained up religiously, or to admit females to the Lord’s table, or to sanctify the first day of the week? Pray, by what authority do ye do these things?

It is possible that some Baptist brother may retort—‘as our ‘children, through their dry dedication to Christ, are placed in ‘a similar Christian position with those devoted to God by ‘water baptism; why so strenuously contend for a rite which ‘conveys no practical advantage over ours?’ We answer, *first* and chiefly, because we deem our method to be in agreement with the revealed will of God; and his will we regard as a sufficient injunction, not only to baptize infants, but also to do whatsoever he commands us, whether we can see any advantages arising from it or not. On this ground our objectors also frequently and piously proceed. Might not their



members enjoy all church privileges without being previously immersed, as well as after it? Might not their ministers preach as eloquently and successfully without ordination, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, as with them? And might not their religious societies be as select, and zealous, and useful, without attending the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as after doing so? Why, then, enforce these fruitless services in their churches? Simply or chiefly, because they view them as being agreeable to the revealed will of Heaven. The grounds of our actions are the same on both sides. 'What say the Scriptures?' and their holy responses we believe and must ever obey, irrespective of any manifest benefits arising from active subjection to the divine commands. We may possibly misread God's truth; but our aims are to accomplish his published will.

We have, however, a *second* reason for adding water to their verbal and formal dedication of children to God. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, was manifestly designed to be an instructive institution. It was intended, as previously observed, to 'show forth' the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, or that real and spiritual baptism, by which the heart is divinely purified and renewed. Here is the exhibition of a great doctrine, teaching mankind through the organs of vision, as well as through those of hearing. The Hebrews were not merely to talk of sacrifices, but actually and publicly to offer them. Believers in Christ are not merely to sit around the table of the Lord, but to eat and drink the bread and wine placed upon it. Nor would it be less absurd for our opponents to place their converts in the dry channel of a river, or in a baptistry without water, than to dedicate infants to Christ without applying to them this purifying element. Baptism, like its twin sacrament, is designed to effect several objects through the same action. This is an instructive dedication of the young to Jehovah. It teaches indirectly the original pollution of human nature. It illustrates the anointing of the Holy Spirit; which a dry dedication of children to God cannot do. It constitutes a public covenant transaction, in which parents pledge themselves to train up their offspring for God, and teach them to love, serve, trust, and glorify, the Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Edwards remarks, 'There is one fault among others in the Baptist *system*, that it places the rising generation so entirely out of sight. And in this it differs from all the dispensations of God, of which we have any knowledge; and which alone would lead to the presump-

'tion that it is not of God. I do not mean that the Baptists 'do this; for in this respect their conduct is better than their 'system; but their system places them out of sight. And in 'this it differs from all the dispensations of God.'

Mr. Noel says, 'Let me add this, that I believe, amongst 'the multitude of those who, as ministers of Christ, have seen 'it right to renounce the doctrine of Infant Baptism, as an 'abuse in the' [established] 'church, which has no sanction in 'Scripture, there are very few, if any, who have not felt it 'their duty to be baptized by immersion.' The import of this passage, I presume to be, that the state clergy, who have left the establishment, were so annoyed and distressed at the abuse of Infant Baptism by sprinkling, that they entirely renounced this service, were immersed themselves, and adopted the scheme of adult dipping. But would it not have been more consistent, had they renounced baptism altogether? For, even in the state system, baptism is not rendered more pernicious, or more really abused, than by the dipping of numerous deluded or hypocritical professors, and then inducting them into the fellowship of the children of God—as is notoriously done by our opponents of all parties, and all over the Christian world. Under strong excitement, men sometimes fail to discriminate wisely; and ardent minds are prone to run to extremes. With equal propriety, these clerical seceders might denounce the Lord's Supper, and turn Quakers at once—as that sacrament, according to their views, has also been shockingly perverted in the national religion. And so has preaching, and a stipendiary ministry. These gentlemen should not forget, that Adult Baptism, involving Baptismal Regeneration, is as much a doctrine in the law-church, as the baptizing of infants; and that dipping babies and adults are quite canonical, if not often performed by the parish minister.

While Mr. Noel exultingly remarks, that most seceding clergymen join the ranks of the Baptist community; can he account for the motives which induce so many Baptist ministers to conform to the Church of England—more by far, it has been said, in proportion to their numbers, than evangelical Congregational Pedobaptists? It may seem strange to our worthy divine; were I to venture the conjecture, that it partly, if not chiefly, arises from the fact, that, after all the apparent incongruities between the doctrine of baptism, in the establishment, and of our Baptist brethren; there is a much greater accordance between them than appears on the surface of the affair. Our opponents tell us, that faith is necessary to baptism.

So says the state religion; only the latter recognizes a faith by proxy, while the former does not. Dipping in baptizing is the only mode adopted by Mr. Noel and his friends; and the rubric of the Church of England, not only allows but even recommends it, when the child is able to bear it. Then the baptized, among both parties, are regarded and treated as regenerate and saved, after having undergone this ceremony; the difference being, that this work was effected in the soul before the baptism in one case, and at the baptism in the other. Most assuredly, there is a greater accordance between the Baptists and the state-church, on the question of baptism, than there is between Congregational Pedobaptists and the said church, on the same subject. In a word, if Mr. Noel and his seceding brethren had resolved actually to depart, as far as possible, from the errors and evils of the establishment on this ceremony, they should not have stopped at the half-way house of adult and believers' immersion!

OBJECTION VIII. *The baptism of infants is never commanded in the New Testament, and therefore the baptism of them in the Red Sea can be no guide for us under the gospel dispensation.*—On this point we shall have to enlarge hereafter. At present we remark, that we certainly have no institution of baptism, *de novo*, in the New Testament. And we may challenge any person to arrive at a clear and satisfactory conclusion respecting either the mode or the subject of this ordinance, from any accounts or records of its administration given us in the New Testament only. It is easy to jump at conclusions, from the places in which John generally performed this rite, from the verb and prepositions employed to describe it, and from the indefinite statements given of the people who came to his baptism. But such obscurity rests on the whole affair, as detailed by the evangelists and apostolical writers, that without recurring to the baptisms administered in the Red Sea, and afterwards among the Jews, and which must have been well known by their descendants, in the time of the Baptist, we cannot possibly or properly understand it. Mr. Noel felt this when he referred to the baptism of Jewish proselytes, in order to obtain his chief testimonies in support of dipping. The like indefiniteness attends the narratives of the after-baptisms of the disciples and apostles of Christ. Nor is the topic of baptism alone in this position. The Lord's Supper cannot be fully comprehended without recurring to, and duly studying, the Lord's Passover. It was evidently intended that the Old and New Testaments should form one

book; be in the hands of the same readers; mutually explain and confirm each other; and, united, constitute a complete and perfect directory to the followers of Christ, in all parts and ages of the world.

‘In regard to any expression that relates to a religious ordinance, we conceive, that the shortest and the surest way to obtain a right understanding of it, is to inquire, in what sense such an expression was likely to be understood by those among whom the ordinance originated; and when a scriptural expression is the subject of discussion, we must search the Scriptures, if we would ascertain its meaning. In the present case we should also do well to remember, that the ordinance referred to is evidently of Jewish extraction. It was introduced before the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and was, in the first instance, confined to the Jewish nation. We may, therefore, expect to see the term, by which it is designated, employed in allusion to some of the services that were familiar to that people. Nor shall we be disappointed.’ *Agnostos*, p. 70. The early Hebrew converts of John and of the Saviour’s apostles, would, of course, be as familiar with the subjects, as with the modes of baptism prevalent among their own nation. It is no unusual case for certain Baptist writers, preachers, and advocates, to declare most gravely and dogmatically, that baptism is a rite peculiar to the New Testament dispensation, that the Gospels and Epistles would be defective, if not affording full and explicit direction as to both the subject and mode; and that it is wrong to recur to the Old Testament, or to Ecclesiastical History, to obtain any information on the question. Yet to both these sources of information they are constantly referring, when they imagine there is anything in them corroborative of their sentiments—evincing that their own dogma is invalid, and that the New Testament does not, of itself, afford all they need to support and defend their exclusive believers’ baptism.

Mr. Noel justly observes, ‘We have reason to think, that John and the disciples of Christ, administered the baptism to which, as Jews, they were accustomed. The simple record that they baptized, must be understood to declare, that they did so according to the common recognized practice. The use of the word “baptize,” as a term generally known, and which called for no explanation, proves that it must be understood in its common sense. Had the external act [or the proper subjects] of baptism, when that rite was administered by the apostles, differed materially from the



‘external act’ [or the customary subjects] ‘of baptism as practised by the Jews, the difference would have been explained, to prevent mistake in successive generations. And since there is no explanation whatever,’ [as to either mode or subject,] ‘we may conclude that the apostles administered baptism after the manner of the Jews.’ *Mode*, p. 54, 55. We are, thence, directed back to the Old Testament, and to the practice of the Hebrews, to ascertain who were baptized by John and the Lord’s disciples, as well as to the right mode of baptizing—for in both points they are equally obscure in the New Testament—during and after the Saviour’s sojourn upon earth. From this plenary guide to the ordinance of baptism, we gather that adults and children were equally the subjects of baptism; that the mode consisted in the application of the element to the subjects, either by the Almighty himself, as in the Red Sea, or by his ministers subsequently, in the course of their official services; and that great advantages accrued from being thus purified and consecrated to God. This was the case when John began to preach and baptize; and from this prior administration we naturally infer, that the forerunner of Christ proceeded in his work, as his priestly ancestors had ever done before him, and that our Lord’s apostles followed in the same course of operation.

Would it not be an equally valid objection to our reasonings, to aver, that every gospel, epistle, and separate portion of the New Testament, ought to contain full and plain information on all matters of doctrine and duty, discipline and privilege, rite and ceremony, requisite for a congregation to understand, without any other part of divine revelation; especially of the Old Testament, seeing each distinct epistle was addressed to a separate congregation; and that, in all probability, the members had no others for a considerable time? The entire contents of the New Testament were not collated and combined for some years after; in fact, not till subsequently to the death of the apostle John, who is said to have lived a hundred years. Yet some of these portions of divine truth contain not a word of direction as to the proper modes or subjects of baptism, nor concerning the Lord’s Supper, nor several other matters which it must have been important for the people to know, and for their teachers to have confirmed, by reference to a divine authority. Where, then, could these early converts have looked for a full explanation and confirmation of the sacraments, and of various doings and probably doctrines too, with satisfaction, but, like the Bereans, to the Old Testa-



ment? To a less extent would be the case when the New Testament Canon was complete, especially after the inspired authors of it were gone to heaven.

Mr. Hall says, 'The wisdom of God in the arrangement of successive dispensations, seems averse to sudden and violent innovations, rarely introducing new rites, without incorporating something of the old. As by the introduction of the Mosaic, the simple ritual of the patriarchal dispensation was not so properly abolished, as amplified and extended into a regular system of prefigurations of *good things to come*, in which the worship by sacrifices, and the distinction of animals into clean and unclean reappeared under a new form; *so the area of immediate preparation was distinguished by a ceremony not entirely new, but derived from the purifications of the law, applied to a special purpose.* Our Lord incorporated the same rite into his religion, newly-modified, and adapted to the peculiar views and objects of the Christian economy, in conjunction with another positive institution, the rudiments of which are perceptible in the Passover. It seemed suitable to his wisdom, by such gentle gradations, to conduct his church from an infantine state, to a state of maturity and perfection.' p. 29, 30.

We infer further, that if baptism were a universal, or even a general practice under the Mosaic dispensation, till the advent of the Messiah; and if proselyte baptism of entire families, on the faith and profession of their parents, were common during the latter periods of the Hebrew Commonwealth—as most of our intelligent and candid opponents are constrained to admit—there could have been no more need of fresh instructions and commands on this point, under the gospel economy, than there was about keeping holy the sabbath day. The old rule would have been observed in this respect, as it was in many others, during our Lord's ministry. Fresh injunctions would have been superfluous, equally with fresh commands to the Jews to admit females to the Paschal Supper. If nothing prohibitory were said, the ceremony would go on as previously—just as circumcision, for a long time, was resolutely practised by the Christianized Hebrews—unless, indeed, it were rendered impracticable by the altered condition of the reformed New Testament church; but which, confessedly, was not the case respecting baptism. We know that this last institution was not one of the ancient ordinances which were abrogated or done away in Christ; for it was universally administered in his time; and long after his

ascension to heaven, by his specially appointed and divinely directed apostles. And as the rite was continued, it would have been but natural to continue baptizing the like subjects, with respect to age, sex, and religious attainments. This would unquestionably be done, unless the supreme Author of the original institution had plainly and publicly prohibited it. Mr. Fleming truly observes, 'There was no manner of occasion 'for giving any *express law* to the Jews, about the *initiation* 'of their infant offspring into the Christian covenant; since 'by *Water Baptism* they had ever been used to initiate the 'children of converts to Judaism; and in consequence of which 'John the harbinger came initiating them and theirs into the 'new dispensation by water.' p. 64. Lightfoot remarks, 'There 'needed no mention of baptizing infants, this having been 'ordinarily used in the church of the Jews, as ever it hath 'been in the Christian church; it was enough to mention 'that Christ established baptism for an ordinance under the 'gospel; and then *who* should be baptized was well enough 'known, by the use of this ordinance of old.' *Harm.* p. 10.

The law of circumcision was first enacted by Jehovah; and all the Israelites, on that foundation alone, have continued, through thousands of years, to circumcise their male children; and that notwithstanding the greatest reformatations, revolutions, captivities, convulsions, and dispersions of the nation. The sabbath was publicly appointed, and the mode of its observance described, at Sinai; and that sufficed for all coming time among good men, and was duly kept during the apostolic age. Even certain ordinances, that anciently came or crept into use, and were long continued among the Jews, received the divine sanction and blessing; though we have no account of their original institution—the feast of the dedication, and the synagogue services being among the rest. What is remarkable, in this last instance, that while we have no record of the first establishment of synagogues, yet their government and modes of worship, were, in a great measure, embodied in Christian churches by the apostles, became of divine authority and of perpetual observance—as the practice of our opponents, as well as our own, fully manifests. Had Infant Baptism never existed before the days of the apostles, there might have been some small force in the objection. But as the origin of it was, at least, as old as the days of Moses; and as, under other names, it was continued to the time of Christ; the argument of the Baptists is not of the slightest validity. It might be as justly said, as there is no command in the New Testament to keep

holy the Sabbath day, therefore, it ought not to be observed by Christian people.

There is no command in the New Testament for females to keep the passover; nor is there an instance of any woman or child having attended it, except the Virgin Mary, when Christ was twelve years old. And her going up to Jerusalem, 'after 'the custom of the feast,' at that particular time, stands related to certain other events which the sacred historian deemed proper to chronicle. Luke ii. 40-52. But are we, hence, to conclude, that no other females or young persons ate the passover during the very long period which elapsed from the days of John the Baptist till the death of his venerable namesake, John the divine? It was the custom for them all to do so, and it was doubtlessly done; yet it is not mentioned any more than, that parents were accustomed to feed, clothe, and educate their offspring. Nor was Infant Baptism more likely to be specifically enjoined or recorded than the duty and practice of providing meat, drink, and apparel for their children. Show us a command, either to or by the apostles, not to continue to baptize infants, like that respecting circumcision; nor, in future, to keep the Sabbath day; nor, in gospel times, to admit females to the Lord's passover; then something to the purpose would be forthcoming. English laws, enacted in the sixteenth century, are still in legal force, unless, in the mean time, they have been formally repealed by the British legislature. Of themselves these laws never lose their original authority by mere lapse of time. Neither do the laws and institutions of the ancient church of God. They are ever binding till divinely abrogated.

After a divine law has been promulgated, an institution established, or a rite introduced, among God's people, we hear no more of it, unless some remarkable circumstance occur in the history of the church to necessitate a reference to it. While obedience is practised; while matters go on as at first enjoined; and while nothing material transpires in connexion with it; the sacred historians are remarkably silent on the subject. This was the case with circumcision, sacrifices, offerings, priestly engagements, purifyings, and many other matters, among the Hebrews. Hundreds of years passed in the quiet and regular performance of the rites and duties originally enjoined, without a line to assure us of the fact. It is only when something unusual takes place, that we read of circumcision, sacrifice, oblations, purifications, and the like. Then reference to them is made, not to tell us that such laws and

ordinances were in existence, and, that such rites were of daily practice, but that they had been broken or neglected; or that some striking affair had transpired in connexion with them. For the mere object of telling us they were continued, I think, we never read a verse in the whole volume of the Scriptures. On this principle, which no careful interpreter of God's word will question, the baptism of the children of the Jews, or of Heathen proselytes, if once established, or commenced with the divine approval or command, was not likely to be noticed again in the sacred annals—unless some remarkable event occurred in connexion with it. This will also hold true in reference to circumcision, the daily sacrifices, the annual festival, and the observance of the Sabbath. As an illustration, we observe, that circumcision, which must have been of daily occurrence among the Jews, is mentioned only at long intervals in their records. From Gen. xvii. 11, to Gen. xxxiv. 15, a period of 158 years, it is not once mentioned. From Gen. xxxiv. 15, to Ex. iv. 26, a period of 340 years, it is not mentioned. From Josh. v. 8, to Jer. iv. 4, a period of 839 years, it is not mentioned; and from Jer. ix. 25, to Luke i. 5-9, a period of 614 years, it is equally unnoticed, in God's word. Nor was it more likely to be recorded, that when a Gentile was proselyted to Judaism, or a Jew to Christianity, by baptism, his children also were proselyted with him; since the practice of the whole family going along with its head, and undergoing similar rites, was a practice immemorial. But had the custom been changed, we should soon have read of it; as also of any material alterations taking place in its designs or observances. The ten commandments are as binding on the Jews as ever they were; and for this simple reason, they have not been divinely repealed, nor is the observance of them, in the ordinary way, often mentioned. But if flagrantly broken, we then hear of the transgression.

The like holds true in the general transactions of mankind. Who, in writing a concise history of an Independent church, would tell us that its ministers were accustomed to preach on the Lord's day; that they had one or two weekly services; that the people sang hymns; that the children were baptized by aspersion? Or, to come to secular matters, What historian of our country would tell us, that, during the last hundred years, farmers used to have their land plowed, harrowed, sown, and the produce reaped, thrashed, winnowed, ground, and made into bread, cakes, and puddings? or, that builders erected houses, and that commercial men bought and sold

articles of daily use? I think I may venture to say, that you may look through the brief biographies of a hundred Christian Ministers, Baptists and Pedobaptists, and never learn from them, that they ever baptized a single man, woman, or child; or administered the Lord's Supper, or preached sermons, or visited the sick of their congregations—except something extraordinary were connected with such engagements. All this is taken for granted, and is supposed to require no account in such narratives. In fact, it can only be assumed that baptism was administered at all in several of the congregations formed by the apostles, or in their time. We have no account of any baptism administered at Antioch, at Colosse, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, at Ephesus, or in the other Churches of Asia Minor. But the fact we as fully believe as if we had a divine record of it. Inference, based on previous or collateral practice, is our guide in this matter. Should it be urged, that infants were not baptized in the above-named churches, we should have equally good grounds for saying, neither were any adults—silence being observed in both cases alike.

There is no doubt in my mind, and it is formed on good and satisfactory historical evidence, that not only did John the Baptist, and the apostles of Christ, baptize children; but also that it was regularly and invariably practised in all Christian societies, duly organized by the first preachers of the gospel. But many years passed away before we hear of its being done; and then it is referred to, not to assure us that it was the common or general practice, but incidentally, to illustrate a doctrine, or to check an abuse, or to make an innovation in the ancient manner of observing it. Being so ordinary a practice, being so well known, and being so little ostentatious in its performance; it was passed over as requiring no chronicle; or, if ever recurred to, it was only when something of interest transpired in conjunction with it. The silence of the Scriptures indicates that the former law was observed; and the equal silence of the earliest Christian writers, as to asserting the fact of its observance, immediately subsequent to the apostolic age, may be reasonably construed into the conclusion,—not, that the rite was neglected, but that it was continuously administered to the like kind of persons that had been accustomed to receive it from the time of Moses to the time of John, and from his day, till the close of the inspired canon, and also regularly ever afterwards.

Mr. Jackson has a paragraph so accordant with this view,



that I beg to transcribe it:—"I look upon it as extremely dangerous to the cause of truth, to conclude that certain things were not done from the silence of the historian; because it is not only possible for us to mistake his design, but it is impossible for us to be acquainted with every inducement which he may feel to omit parts of his narration. "The Acts of the Apostles," as the title imports, is not an entire history of the primitive church, but rather a brief journal of parts of the proceedings of a few of the apostles; and the accounts of baptisms, are exclusively confined to the first introduction of the gospel into some of the places where they preached, as the immediate effects of their ministry. In such a journal many things must, of course, be omitted; and nothing is so likely to be omitted as the baptism of infants; for as infants had always belonged to the church of God, and had received the initiatory ordinance, the continuation of this state of things did not require any historical notice, because it was a thing with which every one was acquainted. But every instance in which the church under the present, differed from that under the former, dispensation, created a necessity for a specific relation; and had such a difference existed as the exclusion of infants would have created, this difference in the disputes respecting circumcision, and the admission of the Gentiles, could scarcely have passed unnoticed. As we are not informed of the existence of any difference between the Jewish and the Apostolic churches, and as novelty always gives occasion to historical narration, especially where controversy is excited, we have certainly more reason to avail ourselves of the silence of the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, than the Antipedobaptists, and therefore to conclude, that infant church-membership was continued by the apostles, and that consequently Infant Baptism was practised.' p. 62.

It will doubtless be universally admitted, that John was sent to baptize unto the name of Him who was to come—the approaching Messiah. A solemn purification of all ranks and classes was to take place—such as God had administered to all the Hebrews, previous to the formal promulgation of the Mosaic laws on Sinai—for the purpose of calling attention to the Saviour, to intimate the sanctity of his kingdom, and to prepare the people for the general enunciation of the great and glorious doctrines of the gospel. But respecting the mode in which this baptism was to be administered, and the qualification of the subjects of the ordinance, no new commands were given,

and no fresh instructions were issued. As the priests of old sanctified the people by baptism, and as all the households of proselytes were consecrated with their parents; so John, by descent, a priest, would certainly do the same—unless he had received a divine command to introduce some radical change. Neither of himself, nor from any records of preceding purifications, would he have dipped any person under water, or have excluded any children from the rite administered to their parents. He would naturally have sprinkled them all indiscriminately; and the children would have received the benefits of the ceremony with their fathers and mothers. Had John been called to perform a service never practised before, and the subjects of which were entirely unknown, new directions must have been given; and what these were, we must have gathered from the New Testament, or discovered from the narratives of his proceedings. But, as the case now stands, we arrive at our conclusions, from the modes and practices fully known from preceding details of Hebrew baptisms. In this line of reasoning, Mr. Noel, and other intelligent Baptists, accord. The sum of the facts is, that John, in his day, did as the priests had regularly done before him. And as those priests were accustomed to purify men, women, and children, whenever they became ceremonially unclean, and on other remarkable occasions, therefore, the harbinger of Christ must have done the same. Indeed, the people would have felt greatly aggrieved, had John objected to include their little ones among the privileged and sanctified; since, with themselves, they had ever been associated in all their general and national consecrations.

The only further command we have respecting baptism is contained in our Lord's commission to his apostles. A higher, and an ultimate purification, consecration, or initiation, was to take place, on entering the perfectly reformed, renovated, and simplified, congregations of the Lord. The people were to be dedicated anew—not now in the name of Him that was to come, but in that of the risen Saviour, who had finished his redeeming work, and been received up into glory—or rather, in the name of the ever blessed and adorable Trinity. But, still no fresh specific directions are given, as to either the mode or the subjects of this ceremony. Those who believed in the Messiah, and agreed to be guided by his gospel—like those who had believed in Moses, and became subject to his laws—were to be baptized, and then taught more perfectly the doctrines of Christianity. All nations were to be baptized to him, as the Hebrew nation had been baptized to its great

Lawgiver. That this baptizing was to be general, we gather from the fact, that the teaching, to succeed it, was not to be limited. Every one who was to be systematically taught the elements, doctrines, duties, and privileges, of the religion of Christ, was previously to be baptized. Therefore, every child, having the capacity of being taught, even the first and simplest rudiments of theology, or merely the existence of God, or to lisp, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' had a capacity to be baptized, and a divine right to Christian baptism. And if these were qualified and entitled to receive this ordinance, our opponents will not think it worth their while to prove, were it possible, that still younger children should not be partakers of it. In Chron. xxxi. 16-18, we read, 'Beside their genealogy of males, from *three years old* and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for their service in their charges, according to their courses, both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges, by their courses; and to the genealogy of all their [other] 'little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation, for in their set office, they sanctified themselves in holiness.' On this passage, Mr. Scott remarks, 'The sons of the priests, who attended with them, as it seems, from three years of age, to learn the work of the sanctuary, previously to the time of their officiating, had a provision made for them.' While referring to the age in which children of old were put into office, I will quote a passage respecting the time when children now are supposed really to begin to learn.

In '*The Educator*,' of July, 1855, the writer says, 'It was the opinion of Pestalozzi—an opinion which has ever since his day been gaining ground—that education of some kind should begin from the cradle. Whoever has watched, with any discernment, the wide-eyed gaze of the infant at surrounding objects, knows very well, that education *does* begin thus early, whether we intend it or not; and that these fingerings and suckings of every thing it can lay hold of, these open-mouthed listenings to every sound, are the first steps in the series which ends in the discovery of unseen planets, the invention of calculating machines, the production of great paintings, or the composition of symphonies and operas. The activity of the faculties, from the very first, being spontaneous and inevitable, the question is, whether we shall supply in due variety the materials on which they

‘may exercise themselves; and to the question so put, none  
‘but an affirmative answer can be given.’

There is another fact corroborative of our position. While the commission to baptize is based on the assumed previous knowledge of a practice prevalent among the Hebrews; so *the method of proselyting or of making disciples*, enjoined in the same commission, must have been previously understood, by the apostles of Christ, from a foregoing practice in Israel. Our Lord does not give them directions as to the mode of proselytism. He does not say, go and preach to the people, work miracles, persuade them, warn them, enter their houses, collect them in synagogues, or heal their diseases. Nothing of the kind is said. ‘Proselyte all nations’—make disciples, collect scholars, then baptize and teach them. But no specific method is defined in this commission, no rules are drawn up, no plans are laid down. As holy men of former, or of more recent, times had done in such cases, so the apostles were to do. And the apostles went forth and did as their predecessors or themselves had done before. The means of proselyting, as well as the proper subjects and mode of Christian baptism, were assumed to be so well understood, before the baptismal commission was given, as to require no detailed explanation. The only difference between the former and present proselytism and baptism consisted, not in the mode or in the subject, but in consecrating to a higher Name than that of Moses, and to a more simple and spiritual dispensation than that of the law. When the usual customs and rites were so well known, and, in themselves, were so perfect; fresh instructions would have been superfluous. At any rate, none were given. The former custom was their guide; and this they followed in baptizing, as well as in proselyting, and in many other Christian duties.

Even in respect of circumcision, the command of God to Abraham was, as far as we read, so brief and indefinite, and yet so readily and well understood by the patriarch, that Michaelis, in his ‘Laws of Moses,’ supposes that the leading members of his household were previously well acquainted with the operation. This he deems probable from the accounts which ancient historians give us of the practice of this rite by the Egyptians and other nations in the times of the remotest antiquity. With the latter it was a national institution. God converted it into a religious one, and made it the sign of the covenant between the descendants of Abraham and himself for ever. *Art.* 185. Now, as the ministers of the New Testament received no particular direction, as to the mode



or subjects of baptism, so we conclude, on the principles assumed by Michaelis, that they gathered their instructions in this case from what they had read in the Old Testament, where ample and minute information was given to their official predecessors. In truth, throughout all the teachings contained in the preachings and writings of Christ and his apostles, there is a taking for granted, that the Jews, to whom they at first addressed themselves, were conversant with the meaning of the religious terms and phraseology employed, and with the institutions and services to which allusion was continually made. The attainment of such qualifications had been made by the schooling of the nation for, at least, fifteen hundred years.

To prove still further the difficulties in which persons often involve themselves by demanding explicit and positive directions, as to the proper subjects of baptism, denying the right of infants to this ordinance, because they are not literally and unequivocally named; we may refer to the case of females and the passover, under the law. In Ex. xii. 3, 4, we learn, that a paschal lamb was to be provided for every house, or for two or more neighbouring families, in case the members of one were not sufficient to consume it at once. Hence, we gather, that all the members of the family were to partake of this sacramental meal, without excepting adult females or youths of either sex. But, in a subsequent verse, 48, we read, that no uncircumcised person was to eat the passover. Now, according to the literal interpretation of these passages, women could have formed no part of the houses, or households of the Hebrews, when they left Egypt, and could not have partaken of the passover—for this reason, that they were not circumcised. Here females are not only apparently overlooked, but are verbally prohibited from going to this sacred feast! In this way our opponents reason respecting infants, in reference to baptism. They are not expressly said to have formed a part of the families baptized by the apostles; hence there were none in them! And as they are not literally stated to have been baptized, therefore, they were not baptized at all!

But the fallacy of this deduction is manifest. Females did form a part of the Hebrew households, and they did eat of the passover, notwithstanding the omission of their specific names in the one case, and the prohibition of all uncircumcised persons to partake of it in the other. And, for aught our opponents have advanced to the contrary, children, though



not verbally named, as parts of the New Testament families, said to have become Christians and been baptized, might have been there, and have been consecrated to God with their parents. The literal reading of the sacred text of the Old Testament would certainly exclude females, of all ages, from the passover far more clearly and completely, than the literal reading of the New Testament would exclude infants from baptism. Those who concede, that women ate of the paschal feast, will find it difficult, on the mere ground of non-description, to prove that infants were not baptized unto Christ. The two cases here referred to are perfectly analogous, and must stand or fall together—that is, either we must conclude that no Hebrew females partook of the Lord's passover, or that children, in the New Testament churches, might have been and were baptized; though they are not expressly mentioned as having undergone this rite.

Our opponents demand of us explicit and direct statements in support of Infant Baptism, while they readily dispense with them in other cases of, at least, equal interest and moment. Most of these antagonists are Congregationalists. They believe, and, I think, rightly, that their form of church order is perfectly scriptural, best adapted to promote the honour of God, and to accomplish the purposes of divine mercy in the world. But where is this form of church government plainly defined, or positively enjoined in the Word of God? Are not our brethren obliged to compare scripture with scripture; to examine various New Testament narratives and incidents; to infer from unconnected premises, and to conclude from the entire aspect of apostolic procedure, before they can arrive at their present convictions on Christian Congregationalism? In fact, as a comparative anatomist, on discovering a number of scattered bones, carefully collects, nicely examines, and skilfully adjusts them, according to their natural position, makes up the animal outline complete, and determines its species; so the Congregational Baptist, from detached portions of God's Word, makes out his system of church government and order; and in no other way. Nor does he imagine, that his method is objectionable; but perfectly rational and proper. Why then should he object to our adopting the like course with analogous materials? Why must we have plain, positive, and express statements in defence of Infant Baptism, when he has not the like in support of his own form of church government, and still feels satisfied and confident that the latter is perfectly agreeable with the manifest mind of God?

Again, our friends entertain no doubt, that all children dying in infancy are among the elect, and go directly to heaven. In this too, of course, we deem them perfectly correct. But can they find any clear and positive assertion in God's word, warranting this important and interesting conclusion? Are they not obliged to examine many scattered texts of God's truth; mark the spirit of divine benevolence towards children pervading the sacred volume; and to infer from hints and indirect expressions, that children, when they die, do not go to perdition, but are taken to a world of ineffable joy? Why, then, may we not follow the like logical processes in reference to Infant Baptism? If they are compelled to conclude, from hints and intimations, that dying infants are saved; is it wrong in us to follow a similar course of inquiry respecting their baptism and introduction to the visible congregation of Christ? Why must we have direct, positive, and explicit declarations in defence of Infant Baptism, while our opponents dispense with the like in maintaining their views of church government, and of Infant Salvation? It is no more expressly said, that dying babies go to heaven, or that Independency is the only right and scriptural system of church order, than it is that all infants ought to be baptized—while we think all of them may be clearly gathered by inference from the Word of God.

Dr. Gale says, in substance, 'Adult Baptism and that by dipping is delivered to us in Scripture *plainly* and clearly. 'Infant Baptism and by affusion, but obscurely, if at all. 'Therefore, *we* do what the Scriptures expressly teach; while *they* do, at best, but what is very obscurely taught, so our case is secure, and far the most eligible.' p. 75. To this Dr. Wall replies: 'Giving the Lord's Supper to *men* is commanded in Scripture plainly and expressly: giving it to women but obscurely; therefore they that would give it only to men, and refuse it to women, would act most securely.... 'Whence the consequence is, they that give it to men, are certainly in the right, so far as they go; but yet they would do ill in refusing it to women. And so they that give baptism to adult persons, not already baptized.... do well; but they do ill in refusing it to infants also.... A servant employed in his master's business, must do his master's will in all things, which he understands to be really meant and intended by him; though some of the things be more plainly expressed than others of them, which he knows by the nature of the thing, and by good consequence from his master's words, to be his true meaning.' v. iii. 79, 80. Besides, the question

before us is not, Whether Adult or Infant Baptism be the more clearly revealed, or whether a choice must be made between them? The baptism of adults, not previously devoted to God in this ordinance, is universally admitted. The only point to be decided is, whether the baptism of infants, however obscurely stated, or however ascertained, like female communion, can be made out to be the duty of parents and ministers? One duty may be plainer than another, and yet both may be equally obligatory on us.

Infant Baptism is not to be put in opposition to Adult Baptism, any more than infant circumcision is to be put against adult circumcision. The rite is the same, and, under varied circumstances, both are proper. We all complain of Unitarians, that, in writing against the divinity of Christ, they labour to prove his humanity, which no Trinitarian for a moment disputes. In the same way the Baptists, in writing against baptizing infants, quote numerous passages, and adduce long arguments, to prove the baptism of adults, which, in certain cases, we believe as fully as themselves. This kind of reasoning is more specious than conclusive, and more likely to ensnare the ignorant, than to convince the thoughtful and intelligent. As we believe in the humanity of the Saviour, and the apostolic baptism of adults, especially on the introduction of Christianity, at any time or to any place; we have no question to agitate on these points. Let Socinians and Baptists, if they can, disprove the divinity of Christ, and the baptism of infants; for on these heads only are we at issue either with the Socinian or the Baptist.

While discoursing on the want of command or example for Infant Baptism in the New Testament, I may cite the following remarks from a work entitled '*Recantation*,' as in several respects *apropos* to the topic. 'If we should suppose the baptism of infants to be merely a human invention, it is most extraordinary, that, unlike every other error and heresy of consequence, its author is unknown. While the originators of Arianism, Sabellianism, Pelagianism, and a long catalogue of other heterodox opinions and practices are well known and familiar to our ears, no one knows who first introduced Pedobaptism. It is not on record what means he adopted to induce *the Baptists* to imitate his innovation—what sophistry he used to blind their eyes—neither by which of the holy fathers he was opposed and refuted. With regard, however, to the first known advocate of Antipedobaptism, it may be designated Tertullianism. About the year 200, he,

‘with much caution, *advised* the delay of Infant Baptism; but mark, on what grounds and for what reasons. He says not a word of its being not required in the New Testament, or of its being unused by apostolic men; which, had it so been, he could scarcely have failed to know, and which must have been much more to the purpose than any thing else he could advance. All the ground of his objection was, “Lest the sponsors should expose themselves to danger, who, through death, may fail of the performance of their promises, or may be deceived by the wicked disposition of those for whom they promise;”’ [an objection which, of course, does not apply now to those who employ no sponsors at all in baptism.]

‘But Tertullian not only objected to the baptism of infants, under a persuasion that sins committed after baptism were scarcely to be forgiven; he dissuaded young converts in general, and especially young females, from coming to the font, until the lapse of years should have rendered them less liable to be overcome by temptation.—After Tertullian, Gregory, A.D. 250, delayed the baptism of his own children from a similar apprehension, it would appear, to that of Tertullian; *i. e.* that should they sin after baptism, forgiveness was scarce to be expected. From the time of Gregory until A.D. 1120, neither any society, nor even an individual, objected in one form or another to the right or scriptural authority of Infant Baptism.’ p. 13, 14.

OBJECTION IX. *Infant Baptism blends the church and the world*, and, therefore, could not have been administered by Jehovah, or by his command.—Mr. Craps asks, ‘Does not infant sprinkling destroy the boundary which separates the church from the world?’ And then replies, ‘On the system of our Pedobaptist friends, such a community as the world is scarcely to be found. The pious and profane, believers and unbelievers, provided they have been sprinkled in their infancy—all are united to Christ, put into the covenant of grace, are inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and, of course, they all belong to the living God.’ p. 24. In another page, he asks, ‘Is not the practice of infant sprinkling ruinous to the souls of men?’ p. 14. We answer, certainly not; at any rate, not more so than the dipping of unconverted, deluded, or hypocritical adult professors of Christianity; and then introducing them into full communion in Particular Baptist churches. Mr. Eaton asserts, that ‘Infant Baptism is a practice that confounds the church and the world....It converts the gospel into a mere geographical term, so that



‘if a child happen to be born in what is called a *Christian* ‘country, he is, of course, born a Christian.’ p. 194. Mr. Draper inquires, ‘Does not infant sprinkling destroy the boundary ‘which separates the church from the world?’ p. 24.

Mr. Stovel argues, ‘The wide extension and pernicious ‘influence of this error,’ [of baptizing all that are brought to the font,] ‘which contains all that is bad in Dr. Wardlaw ‘and Dr. Owen, exhibits, in a painful light the importance of ‘this controversy. It is diverting the whole attention from ‘the fact of human depravity; it is superseding the original ‘necessity for personal regeneration by the word and the Spirit ‘of life. Its very aim is to baptize all; and thus to destroy ‘all distinction between man and man, until some actual and ‘open transgression has called for church discipline, and, ‘thereupon, for repentance. It identifies the church and the ‘world; and makes it incumbent on the church to prove the ‘unbelief of individuals seeking fellowship, instead of making ‘them declare and testify their faith. In fact, this controversy ‘involves the whole question, whether there shall be a people ‘set apart for Christ, a kingdom of heaven upon earth, or ‘not.’ *Dis.* p. 217. Pengelly says, ‘Infant Baptism goes to unite ‘the world with the church of Christ. Have not the vilest ‘infidels in Christendom received the seal of the covenant, and ‘been grafted into the church, the body of Christ? How ‘grossly absurd! How lamentable, that they should have ‘cause to pour contempt upon Christianity by the errors and ‘follies of its professors!’ p. 95

That Jehovah did baptize infants in the Red Sea is unquestionable, by any intelligent and thoughtful person—as our previous remarks have clearly proved. As to our blending the church and the world through baptizing children; a few observations may be required.—What do our opponents really mean by the terms, ‘*The church*,’ and ‘*The world*,’ in this objection? It cannot be pretended, that Infant Baptism, though introducing the young into the general congregations of professing Christians, blends the spiritual church with the world of heathens, infidels, idolaters and open profligates! Surely, the little innocents we consecrate to Christ, are not to be regarded as on a par with these practical transgressors, and manifest enemies of God! Though children are sinful in their natures, they are not criminals by their conduct. Christ took infants in his arms, and, while he blessed them, declared that ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven’—a remark he never made respecting any baptized adults. Mr. Noel says, ‘Little



'children are humble and dependent, teachable and patient of reproof, simple, free from art; such are the dispositions which Christ requires in his disciples, which grace imparts to them; and having which they are blessed.' *Sub.* p. 223. When his people are declared to be sheep, are not the little ones called the lambs—indicative of their innocence?

Now, if introducing these dear little innocents to the general church or congregation of professed believers in the Messiah, constitute the entire ground of the awful accusation against Infant Baptism, we cheerfully plead guilty to the allegation—observing that in many cases babies, thus introduced, form by far the holier part of the association. If by the church, our opponents mean the converted, the enlightened, and the divinely-instructed disciples of Christ, formed into distinct and particular societies, the recognized and avowed members of our spiritual communions; then we deny, that Infant Baptism can, possibly, blend the church and the world. Call the children 'of the world,' if you please; yet the baptized little ones are not introduced into those select societies or communions; and certainly never as the result of their baptismal consecration to God. They are not inducted to the table of the Lord, nor reckoned with the faithful adults, nor possess any admitted claim to vote, in person or by proxy, in the affairs of our spiritual fellowships, any more than the children of the Baptists, consecrated to God without the application of water. Or, in other words, they are not introduced at all to our select and particular churches. This is well known to all observers of our ecclesiastical order and discipline; and, in fact, to our objectors as well as to ourselves. Mr. Gibbs proposes the following questions, the more strongly to assert the negative:—'Do Pedobaptist dissenters receive any into their communion upon the mere circumstance of their having been baptized in infancy? Does any man plead his baptism when an infant, as a sufficient ground for his admission to the communion of the saints?' p. 26. Certainly not.

If Popery and National Establishments of religion should commit the offences alleged in the objection, it does not follow, that evangelical nonconforming denominations, who also baptize babes, must do the like. But it is only by blending or identifying Popery and voluntary evangelical dissent, contrary to all truth and fairness, that the least semblance of such a charge could be brought against the latter. Our accusers, on this point, must necessarily regard baptism as introducing infants to our special fellowships, in order to prove a case to

our disadvantage; and that disadvantage resulting in the assumed impurity of our societies, by amalgamating in them the clean and the unclean—as in popish and state-churches. Here, however, it may be observed, that whatever objections we may entertain against the baptismal rites and doctrines of these systems—and they are great and many; we cannot justly charge them with making baptism immediately introductory to full and ostensible membership in their communions. Another ordinance must intervene before this is effected. The young must be *Confirmed* before they can partake of the Eucharist. And this confirmation does not take place for several, and often for many, years after baptism: so that, in the proper sense of the term ‘baptism’ among Catholics, and state-episcopalians, does not more really and visibly blend the church and the world, than among ourselves—for, of itself and alone, it does not canonically blend them at all.

When our opponents formally and officially dedicate their infants to God, and thereby place them in the visible church of Christ, as much as we do our children by baptism; is not this as intimate a blending of the world and the church, both theoretically and practically, as is done by us? They actually and designedly place them in precisely the same relative position to their body, as we do baptized children to our own fellowship. But we may ask our good brethren, whether Abraham and his house, Ishmael and Isaac, and his numerous men-servants and their male children, when separated from the idolaters around them, by circumcision—thereby dedicating them to God, and initiating them into the patriarchal church—did not blend the church and the world then, equally as is done by us now, through Infant Baptism? And was not Jehovah the immediate author of this ceremonial? Again, when God himself baptized a whole nation in the Red Sea—some of whom feared the Lord, while many others feared him not—was there not a still more manifest blending of the world and the church—of the good and the bad—than is ever done by our consecrating innocent children to Christ, or initiating them into the congregational school, or general churches of Christ, by water-baptism? Again, when John the Baptist consecrated the mixed multitudes, who resorted to him at the Jordan, Enon, and in the Wilderness of Judea, some of whom doubtless, were pious, waiting and hoping for the consolation of Israel, while we know, by their after conduct, that most of them were unregenerated; did he not really and openly unite the church and the world more than we do by Infant Baptism?

Let our opponents decide in this, as in similar cases, and their affirmative we confidently anticipate.

Mr. Keach says, 'Though we cannot, *as the apostles could not*, 'certainly or infallibly know who were truly regenerated, or 'are true believers; yet they baptized none but such in whom 'they saw such signs of grace, that made them in charity, to 'believe, or hope they were believers; they made a profession 'and confession of their faith.' p. 152. Now, if this be admitted, and if the apostles introduced the baptized into the spiritual communion of regenerated believers—which our opponents suppose—surely, they must have blended the real and redeemed church with the world of deluded or hypocritical mortals, in a way in which it is never done by infant baptism. That they occasionally consecrated unregenerated adults to Christianity, by the rite of baptism, through not being able, for certain, to distinguish the good from the bad; we have decided scriptural testimony. Even their inducting unconverted adults into the *outer* church or congregation of Christian worshippers or disciples, more visibly effected the object with which we are offensively charged, than they or we ever did, or could do, by baptizing innocent babies to Jesus Christ—and thereby simply introducing them to the privileges of a religious education, and a ministerial oversight.

Further, when our objectors baptize adults, without any real faith, love to God, or renewal of heart; and which, by their own admission, they do by hundreds, if not by thousands, every year; and then admit them into full fellowship with their select churches—as is their almost invariable rule; do they not blend the church and the world by baptism far more than we do, by baptizing innocent babes; and introducing them into the general association of Christian professors, to be taught and trained up in the knowledge of Christ? Our opponents admit that they take into their spiritual churches people they view as not baptized at all. 'If,' says Carson, 'persons baptized 'are not the persons appointed to be baptized, it cannot be 'Christian baptism, although in mode it may be perfectly correct; 'for Christian baptism is not every immersion of persons, but 'an immersion of certain persons for a certain purpose.' p. 239. 'The mere rite profits them nothing.' p. 240. In truth, when the pious and unconverted unite in congregational worship, join in hearing the gospel, in singing and prayer, is there not as real and as manifest a blending of the church and the world, as there is in baptizing little children; recognizing them as young disciples; and granting them the initiatory privileges

of the Christian dispensation? What man of sense and candour would answer in the negative?

Dr. Ryland remarks, 'one of our *chief* objections to Infant 'Baptism is that it unites the church and the world.' p. 29. 'Baptism,' says Mr. Daniell, 'should be the manifest line of demarcation between the church and the world, between the renewed and the unrenewed' p. 23—intimating that it is so in his own communion, but not among the Pedobaptists. The reader will now readily perceive, that this objection to our system is based on a palpable misconception, or on a gross perversion, of truth and fact; and may be easily disposed of as perfectly invalid. *To me, however, it is clear, that our opponents are the only, or all but the only, people in the world who actually and manifestly blend the spiritual church of Christ and the unregenerated men of the world, by baptizing unconverted adults, and then, as a consequence, admitting them into their holy fellowships.* This evil is never done and never practicable through the baptism of infants, at least, in protestant communions.

The above objection of the Baptists is doubtlessly designed to intimate, that their own religious fellowships are much purer and holier than ours: and that this arises, not from personal care and discrimination, but from the system which they have adopted, and now carefully carry out. This I very much question. In our communions, great pains are taken to guard against the intrusion of unregenerated persons. A good moral reputation, an open profession of the faith, and a confession of experimental piety, are required of all candidates for admission into our spiritual or select associations. To have been baptized by the greatest divine, at any age of life, would, of itself, avail nothing towards admission to our inner church or congregation. And though the ordeal of dipping stands not in the way of the nervous and insincere, in uniting with these bodies of believers; it is more than probable, that the character of our members is quite as unexceptionable as that of our objectors. Probably the following statistics will throw some light on this head:—

In the '*Christian Witness*' for April, 1846, there is a report of the church statistics of the Jamaica Baptist Western Union, for the year 1845. This presents an account of 36 churches, containing 21,161 members. It subjoins, that in the same year, 947 were immersed; 580 were excluded, and 54 had withdrawn. In the same periodical of July 1849, we have another account of the same Western Union, in which it is stated, that there were (independent of 6 churches which had



made no returns) 17,854 members—baptized, 783—excluded, 766—withdrawn, 131. In the English Baptist Manual for 1845, there is reported a decrease by death of 1,739, by exclusion 1,540—that is, nearly as many had been excluded as died. The same manual of 1852 records, that in England and Wales 5,973 were baptized, 2,753 were excluded, and 669 had withdrawn. And in the same manual for 1855, as cited in the '*Patriot*' Paper, there was 'a net increase of members 'by baptism, in 1,041 churches, of 1,679 persons; while '1,671 had been lost by exclusions. The Baptist churches in 'Germany and Denmark present a somewhat similar result—'baptized, 674—excluded, 257—withdrawn, 15.'

It may be reasonably assumed, that the above exclusions or excommunications were for immoral conduct—too painfully indicating, that the subjects of them were really destitute of the saving grace of God in their souls, or that such was the case with a considerable number of them. Of the composition of these churches, *Dr. Campbell*, a Baptist minister of America, speaking of the Baptists in that country—we hope, in a very exaggerated style—expresses his sad conviction, that 'not a tithe of the Baptists will enter the kingdom of heaven.' If by the Baptists, he means the actually baptized, his view is still more awfully distressing. I hope he does not! Upon the whole, the reader will admit, that were we actually to introduce all the infants we baptize into the particular churches of our faith and order, we should not blend the church and the world, by that act, half as effectually as is done by our brethren. At all events, we think it will not be contended, that their societies are a whit purer than our own, or that our infant baptism does more mischief, in this respect, than what they designate, their adult, Christian, or believers' baptism. To every clear and honest mind the reverse will appear to be the genuine truth.

To such persons, moreover, the following remarks of our opponents will appear of little moment against Infant Baptism, as compared with the adult dipping of their body. *Dr. Ryland*, 'asks,' are not the children of believers confessedly *baptized 'into one body* with the children of profligates, of irreligious 'profligates, and superstitious papists all over the world?' p. 30. We reply, by proposing another question, are not vast numbers of unbelievers, profligates, and hypocrites, baptized into the churches of our opponents all over the world? After the above statistics, given *by themselves*, will they venture to answer, No! *Mr. Stovel* remarks, that with his party, baptism



‘stood, like a guard, at the entrance of the church of God, ‘protecting the members of the family in the enjoyment of ‘their privileges and in the performance of their duties.’ *Lec. v. p. 13.* This sounds very oddly, after the preceding home-cast-up accounts. Surely, the guardian angel of their holy temples must be often nodding, or absent from his post! Strangely does sectarian zeal pervert one’s perceptive or reflective faculties! Note the following passage, in the next page:— ‘Men enter the’ [Pedobaptist] ‘church without any change ‘of heart, and they influence the society of the church by the ‘unsanctified developments of their fallen nature.’—“But, my dear friends,” he meant his hearers to infer, “no unholy people ever intrude into the churches of our body; our baptism stands at the door with ‘much water,’ threatening to duck them thoroughly, if they should attempt to enter! And it keeps the wicked, hypocritical sinners out, most completely. The trial or ‘ordeal by water’ is too much for the unconverted! Hence, the singular purity of our communions! Enter, and you will find there none but saints indeed! the Lords’ elect! the sheep of his pasture! Though, of course, we have no little lambs inside, to tease their matronly dams, or disturb the gravity of the venerable rams of our flocks!”

He says, further, ‘By Baptismal Regeneration, promiscuous ‘Baptism, and the Baptism of Infants, the church is thrown ‘open to the world; and the society set apart by our Lord, ‘for cultivating and indulging the fellowship of saints, is ‘*polluted* and *betrayed*; but, by the law of baptizing accredited ‘believers only, this family of God is separated from the world, ‘and guarded by the care of all its members.’ *Ib. p. 9.* All this, and much more of the like kind, he says, though he knows that Infant Baptism, at least, has no more relation to the ‘fellowship of the saints’ than the dry dedication of babies to Christ; and that the baptism of accredited believers only, as administered by his brethren, awfully pollutes and betrays the spiritual society of his own denomination! Indeed, he admits, that ‘It must not be supposed Pedobaptists have no means ‘whereby the pernicious operations of infidelity can be resisted,’ in preserving the purity of their churches. *Ib. p. 26.* What more can adult immersion accomplish for his own party? His Woolwich audience must have been soft indeed, to be favourably impressed with such a gross and wilful misrepresentation of facts! ‘The Baptist,’ says Mr. Noel, ‘has professed his ‘allegiance to Christ at baptism, the Pedobaptist has professed ‘it at the Lord’s Table.’ *Sub. p. 305.* And why may not the

profession be as full, minute, and satisfactory, in the latter case, as in the other, and equally guard the society from ungodly members? That it does so, not even Mr. Stovel will venture to deny. 'To be in Christ,' he remarks, 'is to be subject to his guidance, and to be dependent on his aid, so as to be confessedly, and entirely, and willingly in his power.' *Regen. Lec.* iii. p. 12. Does this gentleman mean to assert, that his adult or believers' baptism keeps out all but such perfect saints from his society? Let the religious statistics of his party answer this question. Surely, boasting, on this head, ought to be kept outside his reverend lips!

It is worthy of remark, that our opponents regard their being baptized, and their making a profession of religion, as the same thing; and that, after undergoing this ceremony, the subjects of it are viewed by their friends, with few exceptions, as real Christians, and entitled to full church membership. The question is, Have you been immersed? If so, and if no flagrant violations of God's Word have recently intervened, you are welcome to the Table of the Lord, in their unpolluted sanctuary. They are distinguished by their Baptism. This is the token, or, as Mr. Noel states it, 'the manifestation of their faith,' and their title to spiritual fellowship in their body. But, in the New Testament we nowhere read that spiritual Christians were recognized by their having been baptized, or by their professions at the baptistry. They were distinguished by their good works—the appropriate fruits of renewed and sanctified hearts, and the exposition of saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is manifest, and will be denied by no competent judge, that adults, be they ever so holy or devoted to God, receive no gift, grace, or power, in baptism, which may not be, and which is not, imparted to every infant consecrated to God in baptism. And it is certain, that as full and indubitable a profession of the Gospel may be, and is, made at the door of our select churches, as in the baptistry of our brethren. These are propositions, the truth of which no intelligent and candid believer will either oppose or question.

In fact, while it is clear, that *we* do not blend the spiritual church and the ungodly world, by the baptism of infants; it is certain, as before proved, that our *opponents* do this by their baptizing numerous adults, and then immediately receiving them into their particular fellowships. We do not introduce baptized infants to the communion of the saints, or to a participation of the peculiar privileges of our select Christian societies. This is known to all men, and can never be

misapprehended by any persons acquainted with the rules and discipline of voluntary, evangelical, Pedobaptist churches. There is not the slightest immediate connexion between our baptism and full spiritual membership. But widely different is the case with our opponents. Nearly all the unconverted people they immerse, they immediately introduce to their particular churches. Indeed, with few exceptions, they baptize them directly into those churches. The candidates become, at once, identified with their spiritual fraternity; they stand in the same position as their best preadmitted Christian members; they are regarded and addressed as dear brethren and sisters in the faith; and are invested with the highest powers and privileges of their societies. In meetings convened to elect fresh office-bearers, to introduce new members, and to decide on questions pertaining to the peace, purity, and prosperity, of their communions; they are placed on a perfect equality with the wisest and best people present. Though totally unrenewed in their hearts, and actually destitute of saving faith, of love to God, and of zeal for his glory; if immersed in due form, they are regarded and treated as genuine Christians. And, if the previously quoted reports of their own denomination are to be credited, and may be deemed fair specimens of the working of their system generally, the numbers of unconverted members in their churches evince, that they blend the church and the world, by their baptism, to a most fearful extent.

In truth, if the church and the world are at all blended among evangelical Pedobaptists, it is certainly not done by infant affusion, but by some subsequent incidental act of our various communions. One thing is certain, that while those who baptize adults, not unfrequently immerse hypocrites, the self-righteous, the secretly immoral, and enemies to God in their hearts—and that in great numbers, as their own self-collected and self-published church statistics fully prove; those who baptize only infants, never can be charged with doing anything of the kind. They, as said before, dedicate to God only the innocent, the humble, the docile, and such as are 'of the kingdom of heaven.' I adduce this fact, not as an argument against the abstract doctrine of Adult Baptism, but as a truth which every ingenuous Baptist will admit, and which, on his own principles, must tell in favour of the claims of our little folks, who, by their baptism, like the consecrated Hebrew children in the sea, are set apart, consecrated to God, and become holy, or dedicated to the Lord.

To repel the groundless and unjustifiable accusation our adversaries so frequently, and so presumptuously, bring against us; I remark, that the evil, in this respect, with which they charge us, they themselves are exclusively guilty. If the 'admixture of the church,' in its spiritual aspect—'and the 'world,' in its ungodly character—'has been one of the most 'fatal evils which have hindered the progress of the Gospel;' (Noel p. 279), our opponents certainly are not the least culpable of all the sinners in our British Zion! This should most certainly induce silence on their part, concerning the supposed 'fatal evils' arising to the purity of a Christian church from Infant Baptism.

In reference to the dipping of such vast numbers of unconverted adults, let me not be supposed to charge our opponents with neglecting the usual or best available means to ascertain the characters of their converts. Cases may occur, in which proper diligence and discrimination may not be employed, in eliciting the sentiments, affections, and discovering the conduct, of applicants for baptism. Sometimes also over-persuasions are used to induce parties to undergo the ceremony of immersion. But to such exceptions I do not particularly refer. The evil is in the system; and the results naturally flow from it, however cautiously carried out. These have enlarged as the respectability of our opponents has increased, and the talents of their ministers have become more popular and attractive. Denominationally, it is as respectable to be a Baptist as a Pedobaptist of any persuasion. The self-deceived and the deceivers will always abound; and our brethren will become increasingly liable to the like deceptions as hitherto practised on them. No care, prayer, or penetration, they can employ, will prevent it. They must be endowed with the power of God himself, who knows all that is in man, to avoid occasionally and frequently baptizing, and thereby adding to their churches, the unregenerated and the ungodly. The principles on which they profess to act, they cannot carry out; for they cannot read the human heart. The wily hypocrite can generally frustrate their purposes, and obtain a baptism from them; which, in its social results, will be as abiding as that of the most sincere and godly man among them. As we have seen, in at least one-third of their cases of dipping, they are acting in direct opposition to the professions they make—nor have they the power of preventing it. Their system must, therefore, be radically wrong. On the other hand, the Pedobaptist, who avowedly receives all infants brought to the font, and there



consecrates them to the Lord, can in no case violate his own principles, can never be deceived, nor baptize any he deems unsuitable subjects.

It might be further reasonably retorted on our evangelical opponents, that if baptizing infants, in common with churchmen, papists, and unconverted people, blends us with them, so as to bring us under the disrepute they attribute to those parties; their dipping adults, in common with Arians, Socinians, Campbellites, Mormonites, and other sects, which they deem and denounce as heretical, must also bring them into an equally close union with these bodies of professors. By what process of reasoning can our zealous antagonists make out baby-sprinkling to be a more uniting and binding ordinance between the sects who practised it, than adult dipping is between the sects who practise that? Call Infant Baptism a Puseyite, Popish, state-church, ceremony; and blame us for being alike and blended with them; and we may, on the same grounds, call adult immersion an Arian, Socinian, and Mormonite ceremony; and reprove them for being alike and blended with these latter systems! This species of allegation against us is futile, and absurd. It might be as justly said, that, because we have chapels and churches, like the Catholics and the Hellenistic Christians, we are, therefore, as superstitious and heretical as those Western and Eastern communities! We may believe and do nineteen things in common with other persons, and yet be perfectly distinguished from them, by differing about the twentieth; much more so when our differences are one out of ten, or one out of half-a-dozen. We agree with most Congregational Baptists on every matter but baptism; why do they not therefore regard us as specially identified with themselves, on the ground of our numerous points of accordance?

The reader will now be prepared to appreciate, at its true value, the following passage of Mr. Noel:—‘Besides, the influence which the baptism of an individual must have on various classes, the church derives no small advantage from the institution generally. The mixture of the church and the world has been one of the most fatal evils which have hindered the progress of the gospel. Baptism is in some degree a preventive of this evil. I have already noticed, that few worldly persons, without strong inducements of a worldly kind, would wish to make so solemn a profession of self-dedication to God falsely. But should they wish to do so, it is not in their power.’ [Is the writer sure of that!]



'The church which is the judge of the qualifications of candidates for membership, has no right to admit any one to membership if the baptismal profession be palpably false.' [But does it never do wrong!] 'Ordered to put away from themselves each wicked person, they are virtually forbidden to receive such, (1 Cor. v. 11-13), and are therefore bound to require from each candidate a sound creed and irreproachable conduct . . . Should a church practise Infant Baptism, it may, notwithstanding the noxious tendency of this error, abound in piety; and no less a church, which is sound in its views of baptism, may be unsound in doctrine and relaxed in discipline, its members without spirituality, and its services without life.' [What great social benefit then is Adult over Infant Baptism?] 'But among the means which tend to prevent such declension in churches, baptism clearly holds a place.' [Certainly, a very low one!] p. 279, 280. Comment on this paragraph is needless. It will be seen that this worthy minister writes like a tyro on this question, and gives us his theoretical notions, rather than the result of much observation or effective study of the working of the scheme he so strenuously advocates.

Jenkins also endeavours to make his readers believe that adult baptism is highly conducive to purity of communion in Baptist churches. He supposes that persons, baptized in childhood, are subsequently admitted into our fellowship by merely answering a few unimportant questions. He says, 'To put the matter however in a more favourable and careful light, what are a little superficial talk with a minister, a few slight questions put by the latter, questions which are more like what the lawyers call *leading an evidence*, than calculated to discover the real character of the examinant, and to all which the examinant gives the general replies of 'yes' or '*I hope so*,' or some answer as little to the purpose; I say, what is all this, or what is a paper of experience and profession (written as probably by another person, as by the party requesting communion) but a piece of previous formality, a mere ceremony, which supposes that the party having been *born holy*, and received baptism in infancy, has already had one stamp or seal affixed to his interest in the covenant of grace, and that, in a certain rotation of years, the other seal is affixable, or the *livery and seisin* to be given, to make the deed complete? . . . But as a body, no denomination takes more pains in this matter, or regards more narrowly the future circumspection of members of churches, than the Baptists. Their views of baptism being so different from the

‘majority of professing Christians, it is natural to think they ‘will obtain all the satisfaction they can respecting the knowledge and conviction of those that submit to it; whereas the ‘author’ (Rev. Matt. Henry) ‘supposes his communicants to be ‘baptized Christians in their infancy, and then admits them to ‘Church-privileges, chiefly on that supposition.’ p. 85, 86.

Whether such notions of our practice, in the admission of members to particular churches, be common among the Baptists, I am not informed. One thing may be asserted, that the representation is a caricature of our proceedings ‘as ‘a body.’ And, further, I believe that ‘no denomination ‘takes more pains in this matter,’ or regards more narrowly the future circumspect conversation of the members of their churches than the Independents, notwithstanding their candidates have been previously consecrated to Christ, and introduced to the general congregation of believers by baptism. And, I think, that, as to the discrimination of character for admission into their communions, our opponents, if their statistics indicate the truth, have little to exult in over ourselves. I opine, that our communions are as pure as their own, and that our excommunications are not proportionately half as numerous. One thing our opponents will not deny, that there are as many contentions, broils, divisions, and all those kind of things, going on among their own lauded and lovely churches as among any others in the country. Whether they enjoy a pre-eminence in these matters, over most Pedobaptist societies, I will not presume to assert—though there are not a few of their own people that have the courage to say so.

Though it may not be exactly in its proper place, I must not overlook the admission of Mr. Tombes, one of the earliest and ablest opponents of Infant Baptism, who fully and repeatedly admits that children may partake of the inward grace of baptism; that all who do so might partake of the outward sign; and that all dying in infancy are the elect of God, regenerated by the Spirit, and go to heaven; and, he adds, that no Antipedobaptist will deny this. *Exer.* p. 24, 142. Probably Mr. Tombes had his eye on the declaration of Peter, in the case of Cornelius and his family—‘Can any man forbid ‘water that these should not be baptized, which have received ‘the Holy Ghost, as well as we?’ Acts x. 47. Consequently, whoever receives the Spirit of God, and is renewed by his grace, should receive the sign of it. Now, this is assumed to be true of all who die in infancy and childhood; and who, at least, on Mr. Tombes’ reasoning, are entitled to receive

this ordinance. But our opponents deprive them of it. Hence, we may safely infer, that more than a third of the human family—who die in infancy or childhood, and who, through the blood of Christ and the inward grace of the Holy Spirit, are prepared for glory, and go thither when they die—are, on the principles of our opponents, denied an ordinance for which they were divinely qualified, and to which they had a most righteous claim. When we compare this vast number with those baptized on a public profession of faith, we shall perceive that, according to the above concession, not one in fifty who is entitled to baptism could ever receive it.

The reason assigned for omitting the baptism of these numerous proper subjects is, that they cannot be distinguished from those other children who are not baptized by the Holy Ghost, and who are not destined to an early grave. *Ib.* p. 157. They prefer depriving millions of qualified subjects for baptism every year, of their Christian rights, lest the ceremony should, perchance, be administered to some not qualified to receive them. But might not the like cautious prudence prevent their baptizing thousands they now immerse on a peradventure, and recklessly admit into their churches? They, indeed, dip no one of whose spiritual regeneration they are absolutely certain. They allow they can read no man's heart, and even that this was beyond the power of the holy apostles themselves. They have no more assurance that the adult they immerse, is one of the elect and regenerate people of God, than we have that the baby we sprinkle is one of the regenerate and elect children of grace. They will run the venture with a man; but we must not do so with an infant! If their own foregoing statistics may be relied on, do not our opponents act on this venturesome principle in reference to adults? Do they not dip multitudes of doubtful converts, rather than deny the rite to any that are supposed to be spiritually qualified. Have they adequate proof, that more than a half, or, at most, than two-thirds, of their baptized adult converts are partakers of the inward grace? Would their mistakes be proportionately increased, to any very alarming degree, if they were to baptize all children born in the country, and to immerse no more adults?

To the above admissions of Mr. Tombes, Mr. Marshall replied: 'Beside, what one thing can be named, belonging to the initiation and being of a Christian, whereof baptism is a seal, which infants are not capable of as well as grown men? They are capable of receiving the Holy Ghost, of union with

‘Christ, of adoption, of forgiveness of sins, of regeneration, of everlasting life; all which things are signified, and sealed in the sacrament of baptism.’ The rejoinder of Mr. Tombes is, ‘The thing you should prove is, that all the infants of believers are actually partakers of the inward grace of baptism; but instead of this you prove, they are capable of it; they may have it. But doth it therefore follow, that they actually have it? . . . Must children be baptized because they are capable of grace? Then may all children be baptized, for they are all capable of the inward grace of baptism.’ *Exerc.* p. 147. This last inference is doubtlessly correct; unless it could be shown that the actual possession of renewing and saving grace is essential to a true Christian baptism; and that, without such grace, the baptism is vicious and void. But that is not the case among our opponents. Unconverted men are capable of grace, and their baptism on that account is deemed valid, as their practice proves. Children are capable of grace; why then should not their baptism be valid also? Can our antagonists prove the contrary?

The truth is, on Mr. Tombes’ admission, and to which, it seems, no Antipedobaptist will object, at least, a third of the human race, duly and spiritually qualified for water-baptism, by having the inward grace, leave the world necessarily deprived of this ordinance. How much more consistent with the doctrines of Scripture, and with the benevolent views, in other matters, of the Baptists themselves, who baptize so many doubtful adult subjects at a venture, is the practice of those who baptize all the young brought to them for that purpose? For thereby they are sure of dedicating all the elect children to Christ; and they can do no harm to those who may ultimately become the manifest elect men and women, in the course of coming years. Nor does it appear, that even those who may afterwards repudiate their infant dedication to God, and live and die in sin, can receive any very serious moral and spiritual injury from the ceremony! It is this broad and benevolent practice we are defending against the narrow-minded opponents of Infant Baptism; though not on the precise principle propounded by Mr. Tombes, and assented to by all Antipedobaptists.—In the like strain of reasoning, Mr. Rees remarks: ‘It is a very nice and hazardous point to baptize infants;’ [as the offspring of genuine believers;] ‘for who knows what their parents are? since a hypocrite often makes as fair an outward show, as a real saint.’ p. 246. But is it not equally a nice and hazardous point to baptize adults; for who certainly knows that they



are better Christians than the parents of the young we devote to God?—‘since hypocrites among the former, make as fair ‘an outward show as real saints;’ or they would not immerse so many unworthy subjects, as, by their own accounts, they do every year.

This inconclusive method of reasoning against Infant Baptism is adopted and repeated by Mr. Noel, as the subjoined citations will prove:—‘Infants can be saved without faith, ‘because God can give them regeneration, which is equivalent ‘to faith; but they are unfit for baptism, because baptism is ‘a profession of faith; and they are capable neither of making ‘a profession, nor of anything which is equivalent to it. It ‘is a fallacy to infer what man, who is ignorant, may do, from ‘what God may do, who is omniscient. He can give an infant ‘salvation, because he sees in the infant all that prepares a ‘believer for salvation; but man may not give an infant ‘baptism, because he cannot see in the infant the grace which ‘fits a believer for baptism. As infants are generally un- ‘regenerate, and we can never know what cases are exceptions, ‘unregenerate infants ought not to be injured by being baptized ‘as regenerate. Salvation depends upon faith in the adult, ‘and on regeneration, which is equivalent to faith, in the ‘infant; and as infants are capable of regeneration, they may ‘be saved. But baptism depends upon the manifestation ‘of faith or of regeneration; and as infants are incapable of ‘this manifestation, they may not be baptized.’ *Sub.* p. 172. ‘Since infants are not capable of affording proof that they are ‘regenerate, they must be treated as unregenerate.’ *Ib.* p. 170. Jenkins is of the same mind. ‘An infant *may* be an object ‘of God’s special love; but as that cannot be ascertained but ‘by years, ’tis best to wait till that time to administer the ‘tokens of that love.’ p. 23. See also p. 49. The meaning evidently is, that though some infants are qualified for baptism, it must not be administered to them, lest others should be baptized who are not qualified by being regenerate—which would be equivalent to believing; while the baptism of unregenerate children would, somehow or other, be injurious to them. How the preceding declarations of Mr. Noel, and the following from the same pen, are to be reconciled, I must leave to his superior sagacity. ‘Although the doctrine of Infant ‘Regeneration is contrary to Scripture, and refuted by facts, ‘and the Baptism of Infants is unauthorized and mischievous, ‘yet children may early receive the blessing of conversion.’ p. 225.



That circumcision was a blessing, few will deny; nor is it questionable that it typified the regeneration of the heart, and was, so far, equivalent to baptism. But suppose the pious priest of old had reasoned after the fashion of modern Antipedobaptists—‘Of what avail is it to circumcise a child, and thereby ‘dedicate it to secular blessings, and especially to those which ‘are spiritual? We do not know who will live to enjoy the ‘blessings of the promised land, nor whose heart will be really ‘renewed. And if the results of the sign are the non-possession ‘of the good promised, what benefit can it do them? We ‘want to have a divine mark set upon the children, that we ‘may not err in this important matter. Who can say what ‘self-delusion may be the consequence of imparting the token, ‘sign, or seal, when the thing signified may never be obtained, ‘either in religious instruction, or in broad acres of land? Were ‘it not the more prudent plan to defer the rite universally till ‘we see how the children are subsequently circumstanced, and ‘what conduct they display, when arisen to the age of maturity? Will not this be better than circumcising the wrong, ‘or those who may never have the covenanted blessings in ‘this life or in the next?’

But in this way no holy and enlightened man of God ever reasoned among the Hebrews. He did not pass over the supposed right objects, lest he might possibly include the wrong ones. Yet if he had been disposed to cavil on this head, he had just as much real ground for doing so as our opponents have for theirs. He, no doubt, felt that it was more in accordance with the Divine pleasure to circumcise ten future profligates, than to omit one future saint. This certainly was the mind of God, who commanded them all indiscriminately to be devoted to him by circumcision.—To reply, that the cases referred to are not analogous; since, for circumcising Jewish infants, there is the express and clear command of God; while for baptizing Christian infants, there are no such explicit and positive directions; is beside our immediate argument, which rests on the admission of our opponents, that, elect or regenerated children are entitled to baptism as much as Jewish children were entitled to circumcision. The only difficulty we are combatting here arises from our not being able to distinguish which of our little ones are regenerated or elect, or, in other words, which of them will die in infancy, or become genuine Christians in after life? Mr. Carson remarks: ‘The thing ‘that is shadowed by circumcision is not found in the infants ‘who were circumcised. In this it differs from baptism by

'the distance of heaven and earth.' p. 228. He means that unquestionably the grace of God is found in all baptized adults, and that it never was found in the hearts of circumcised infants! He meant this, or his statement is a sheer delusion.

From the reasonings of our opponents, as seen in the preceding quotations, it seems, that the great obstacle to Infant Baptism is a want of knowing whether a child is one of the elect, and whether destined, through the favour of God, to eternal life. If we may judge, from the statements referred to, it is not the want of years, or of knowledge, or faith, or grace, in the usual sense of the terms, that prevents the baptism of infants; but the want of knowing whether the little ones are the objects of divine favour? Could we truly say of any child, it is elect, or was filled with the Holy Ghost from its mother's womb, or could our opponents, from any extraordinary juvenile manifestations, arrive at this conviction; they would, we suppose, be prepared to baptize it. They require regenerating grace, or the proof of electing love, in an individual, no matter how young or old, to induce them to administer this ceremony to him. After the renewal of the heart, the person is entitled to baptism. Here we have a new phase of the matter. Whether the party be consenting or not, be intelligent or not, be active in the rite or not, is of no moment, provided it were, or could be, determined, that the child is one of God's elect, and its infant heart unconsciously renewed by the Spirit of God. Does not this admission neutralize more than half the current objections brought against the baptism of our little ones? It would be well if our opposing brethren would tell us plainly what the actual grounds of their hostility to this ceremony really consist of; whether the supposed lost state of the child, or the want of developing proofs of its election, be the actual preventive of baptism? And then, as previously observed, they should inform us, whether the caution exercised in the case of infants might not be as prudently exercised in the case of professing adults; thousands of whom are dipped every year, without proofs of regeneration, or of being God's elect people? Why should there be such desperate ventures in the latter instance, and no ventures at all in the former.

Mr. Noel further says, 'Our Lord has here forbidden any persons to apply for baptism who are not true believers, and he has forbidden his ministers to baptize any who do not seem to be true believers. But as no man can read another's heart, reason agrees with apostolic precedents to declare that no minister should refuse baptism to a candidate of sound creed

‘and of Christian habits because he does not feel sure of his conversion; otherwise baptism might be refused to many true believers. Real faith, therefore, warrants the candidate to apply for baptism, and a credible profession of faith warrants the minister to receive him.’ *Ib.* p. 44. In a previous quotation, Mr. Noel plainly implies, that some children, those, for instance, who die in their infancy, have regeneration, which is equivalent to faith in the adult, and should be baptized, if they could be distinguished from the unregenerated. But then there is danger in doing this, lest unqualified babies should share in the ceremony, and receive moral injury! But adults are to be baptized when they make a profession of a sound creed, and are of Christian habits; though the minister is not sure of their conversion! Hence, as before noticed, he will run the risk of baptizing an unconverted man, and a consummate deceiver; but will not, on any account, run the risk of baptizing a wrong child, though perfectly innocent, and the offspring of the holiest parents in his congregation; and that, too, though the injury done to the unsanctified adult is manifestly ten times greater than could possibly have been done to a wrong infant! Further, he contends for the venturesome dipping of adults, after having learnt from the statistics of his own denomination, that a very large proportion of persons, dipped on the ground of having a sound creed and Christian habits, are entirely without spiritual regeneration or true faith in Christ! We may, therefore, again safely aver, that to baptize every baby brought to the font, as done by most Evangelical Dissenters, could never do a tithe of the evils our opponents effect by the course they are everywhere pursuing.

OBJECTION X. *Infant Baptism destroys the child's liberty of conscience*, and must, therefore, be displeasing to God.—Eaton:—‘This practice does great injury to the child; for with a name a creed is imposed on the infant, while it is incapable of judging what is right.’ . . . ‘As the child grows up, its young mind is impressed with a sense of the sacred obligation which it contracted in infancy, and that no less than the favour of God, and the hopes of heaven, depend on his holding fast the doctrines of his creed and church.’ . . . ‘Thus the mind is early prejudiced, and becomes enslaved to certain opinions and practices; and its early prepossessions too generally forestall all due exertion of the understanding, and incapacitate the future man for fair inquiry and impartial examination.’ p. 194. Draper:—‘The sprinkling of infants has operated greatly against the interest of Christianity, by

‘exhibiting whole nations as Christians, who have been forced ‘to profess this religion without their knowledge or consent.’ p. 25. Tombes :—Children ‘are baptized in the name of the ‘Lord, who know not the Lord, nor have consented, or perhaps ‘will’ [not] ‘consent to the confession of the name of our ‘Lord.’ *Serm.* p. 30.

If the above objection means any thing pertinent to the purpose of our opponents, it must be, that baptism pledges the young to become Christians instead of Turks, Heathens, or Jews. They must further intend, that children should be free from all parental influence against becoming infidels or pagans; and that nothing should be done to bias their minds, or implicate their consciences in favour of gospel truth and duty! It cannot be intended, that the simple act of Infant Baptism pledges the little folks to become Congregationalists instead of Wesleyans, or Episcopalians instead of Presbyterians; for they are baptized only to Christ, or to his religion generally. When they attain the age of mental maturity or manhood, they can ally themselves with any section of the church they prefer, without, in the least degree, violating their baptismal obligations. If they should then fancy, that ‘Baby-sprinkling was unscriptural,’ they could be soon completely dipped under water; and our differing brethren will be but too glad to lead them down into the baptistry! Such conversions we know to be of no unfrequent occurrence—many persons, baptized in their infancy, being immersed in after years. Ignorant, as we believe them to be, of the designs of Infant Baptism, unacquainted with the scriptural nature of the grounds on which it rests, and assailed by the strongly-reiterated assertions and specious glosses of our zealous adversaries; they repudiate their former discipleship to Christ, and submit to be dipped by some Baptist minister. Here we see, that liberty of conscience is not destroyed by Infant Baptism; that the parties can act as freely as if they had never undergone this ceremony, and that, too, without incurring what our opponents designate, the disrepute of being Anabaptists.

But, pray, what are Pedodapist parents to do with their children? Must they altogether neglect the religious instruction of their offspring, lest they should bias their minds so strongly in favour of scriptural Christianity, that the after adoption of any other system would become all but a moral impossibility? We all know, that such an education would be far more potent in after life than Infant Baptism. The



proofs of this doctrine are manifested perpetually in every section of the religious community. How few are the instances wherein persons, trained up ever so imperfectly in the truths and duties of Christianity, ultimately become Jews, Turks, or idolaters? Do not our objectors themselves equally destroy liberty of conscience in their children, when either publicly or privately they dedicate them to the Triune God? And do they not invariably train them up in the knowledge and favour of the gospel, and of their own particular views and forms of it? Do not their children often hear arguments in their homes and chapels against baby-sprinkling? Would they not deem themselves most negligent of their parental duties, were they not to labour hard and long to teach their offspring the faith they regard as divine, and the discipline they themselves have adopted, as being most agreeable to the will of God?

Surely, our little ones are not to be allowed to grow up like wild asses' colts, and to commence discipleship when they should be young men in Christ; nor to be sitting on the lowest forms of Christian scholarship for the first time, when they come of age! On the principle involved in the objection, children should not be biased in favour of any one political or philosophical system more than another; for that would virtually destroy their mental liberty in all coming time, as much as baptizing them and teaching them the good knowledge of God! It is a singular circumstance, that, when it serves the purpose of our opponents, they contend that Infant Baptism can have no influence on the subsequent profession, life, or condition of the young, doing them neither good nor evil, being a mere useless and unmeaning ceremony. But, then, when a different end is to be gained, they argue as if the future destiny of children, for time and eternity, were wholly, or very essentially, determined by it!

Mr. Noel appears to think that he makes sad havock of all our arguments, in support of Infant Baptism, when, following the example or direction of the late Mr. Knibb, he enunciates, most gravely, the subjoined declaration:—'No baptized infant 'has been baptized by his own consent; no person baptized 'in infancy has ever in his own person honoured Christ's 'ordinance; but conformity was forced upon him when he 'was as unconscious as a stone.' *Sub.* p. 125. He, then, concludes that ministers cannot lawfully or reasonably baptize infants—the act on the part of the child not being voluntary, nor a personal profession of faith. But may nothing be done to or with a child except what it consents to; even though the pious



parent deems it ever so proper and useful, and feels accountable to God for the early education and right training of his offspring? What infant ever gave its consent to be washed in cold water on a frosty morning, or to be taught the alphabet, or to take a dose of nauseous medicine? Do children consent to be born of their own parents, to be subject to their authority, or to be guided by their precepts? Was it their voluntary act to come into the world in this country, whose laws, usages, and religion they may not like, when they arrive at years of discretion? And is their liberty destroyed by having this parental, providential, and legislative dominion, forced upon them, without ever soliciting their approbation, waiting for their 'profession of faith' in these matters, or even once bowing to their baby decisions!

Did the infant seed of Abraham consent to be circumcised, or the little Hebrews, at the Red Sea, to be baptized unto Moses? And do Baptist babies give their consent to be dedicated to Christ, and not to Jupiter, Vishnu, or one of the Polynesian gods; or to be trained up in the knowledge and practice of the gospel, instead of the Shaster or Koran? And did these little ones, 'in their own persons honour God's 'ordinances? was not conformity forced upon them when 'they were as unconscious as stones?' Does not the objection even charge God foolishly? Was it not he who ordered infants to be circumcised, and who, himself, baptized them by tens of thousands, without their consent being ever solicited; and who also, in our judgment, has made it the duty of ministers to baptize the young, under the gospel dispensation, and unquestionably to teach them, from their childhood, to know the Holy Scriptures? Christ put his hands upon the heads of certain infants brought to him, without asking their consent; and now, without soliciting their leave, takes millions of such to glory! Indeed, without begging the permission of ignorant and graceless sinners, he sends down his Holy Spirit to convert and save them; and then imperatively commands them to believe, love, and obey him, as though they had no choice of their own!

All the liberty of conscience a good man is desirous of enjoying, and all to which anyone is entitled, consists in doing nothing of himself, but only just what his Heavenly Father pleases. Nor has a child more right to liberty and self-control than its godly parent. On the principle of the objection we are combatting, Joshua must have acted most imperiously and tyrannically over his children, when he solemnly and publicly

said, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' It would be irrelevant to retort, 'It is a fallacy to infer what man 'who is ignorant may do, from what God may do who is 'omniscient.' *Noel*, p. 172. God commanded all the Jews to circumcise the male children without exception; and all people to train up all their children in the way in which they should go; and his ministers to preach the gospel to every creature, and, we believe, to baptize every child brought to them for that purpose. In these matters, the injunctions are universal, and no right of discrimination or choice is allowed to man. Surely, it is as tyrannical to bring a child up a little Baptist, Calvinist, Arminian, Conformist, Dissenter, or any thing else, as to bring him up a Pedobaptist! One thing is certain, that though a man cannot do what God may or can do, he is bound to do all that God commands him.

The interesting fact should not be overlooked, that *relative piety* may greatly conduce to objective personal benefit. For parents to teach their children the doctrines, duties, and privileges, of the gospel, is purely a religious act, and as much a divine command, as it is the duty of the young to learn them; and both parties offend against the laws of Heaven when these natural relative obligations are neglected. Nor will the readers of Scripture fail to observe, that the faith and prayers of parents are often, if not always, accepted on behalf of their children, the same as if the latter had believed and prayed for themselves; at least, this is true when the young are too ignorant or indisposed rightly to address the Father of mercies on their own behalf. The faith and prayer of the woman of Canaan obtained from Christ the expulsion of a demon from her daughter. *Matt. xv. 28.* The faith and supplication of the Centurion effected the restoration of his beloved servant from an attack of the palsy, with which he was grievously tormented. *Ib. viii. 13.* When a poor paralytic was let down through the tiling of a house, where Christ was preaching, by earnest and believing friends, their faith and zeal were followed, not only by the recovery of the patient's health, but also by the pardon of his sins. *Luke v. 20.* And James assures us that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much for the recovery of the sick, and the forgiveness of transgression. *Jas. v. 15, 16.* Who does not know that believing intercessory supplications are God's appointed means to draw down spiritual, as well as secular, blessings on the world? This is perpetually done by real Christians; and it is being religious towards men as well as towards God.

Such being admitted, is it too much to suppose, that parents may not be religious towards their children—bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, one in covenant and identical in interest—that they may pray for them in faith in the divine promises, and devote them to Christ in the ordinance of baptism, without infringing on the rights naturally pertaining to helpless, ignorant, and totally dependent beings, placed under the care and direction of those very parents, who are answerable to God for the religious instruction of their offspring? This is not a parent's being personally religious for, or instead of, his children; but it is praying on their behalf and in their name; and often,—as in the instances just referred to,—with as much effect, as if children were to pray for themselves. Hence, all good ministers and religious people pray for the children in their congregations and families; and, doubtless, draw down divine blessings on the rising generation. They represent the young at the throne of grace, and plead their cause before God; and surely they may consecrate them to the Saviour, without violating any laws of human nature, or of divine grace.

It is recorded as one of Abraham's religious excellencies, that God could say of him, 'I know him that he will command 'his children and his household after him, and they shall 'keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.' Gen. xviii. 19. Paul highly congratulated Timothy, 'that 'from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures,' (2 Tim. iii. 15,) doubtless, through the instructions of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, who, so far from being charged with invading his natural liberty of conscience, are indirectly commended for biasing his mind and heart in favour of Christ and his gospel. Paul fervently implores the blessings of God to rest on the family of a holy and benevolent father. 'The 'Lord give mercy unto the *house* [or family] of Onesiphorus; 'for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,' &c. 2 Tim. i. 16-18. And that many precious favours are conferred on children, not for their own, but for their parent's sake, every day fully and happily testifies.

I must not pass unnoticed a remark of Mr. Foot on this head: 'Let the parent train up his child in the way he should 'go, but let him not suppose that his children can be advanced by a ceremony about which the Scriptures are silent, 'and in which his child is implicated before the development 'of his intellect.' p. 23. Here, it is admitted, that the child is implicated in its baptism, or in some way bound to answer the

end proposed in this service—to love God, to trust in Christ, and lead a Christian life—for to these purposes only infants are consecrated. Now, surely this may be an advantage to the child, since, if influenced by it at all legitimately, it must be on the side of Christ and godliness. Whether the Scriptures are quite so silent on the matter, as Mr. Foot indicates, is another question. But with what consistency ‘are parents to ‘train up children in the way in which they should go,’ if they are not to implicate them in favour of Christianity? Would not such a training tend much more than Infant Baptism to bias the child and youth in favour of the gospel? And what right have parents to bias the minds and hearts of their offspring on the side of Christ, by teaching, persuading, admonishing, and, perhaps, castigating them, any more than by early and prayerfully devoting them to his cause?

Mr. Draper is more explicit, even than Mr. Foot, respecting the education of the young. ‘A pious Baptist parent, from ‘the earliest dawn of intellect, labours to teach his children ‘divine truth; he commends and devotes them to God in ‘earnest, fervent prayer every day; he continually takes them ‘to the sanctuary; he perpetually admonishes them to avoid ‘all evil, and to pursue after and practice all that is good; ‘and prays with, as well as for them, and assures them of the ‘just claim which God has to their supreme love and constant ‘obedience; and he enforces his instructions by a good and ‘consistent example. Can any Pedobaptist parent do more? ‘Or can his children possess any greater privileges?’ p. 55. But the Baptist parent does all this without the consent of his little folks! He begins with the ‘dawn of intellect,’ and, as far as possible, biases them in favour of Christianity, equally with the Pedobaptist parent. In a word, ‘the little Baptists ‘are virtually forced to profess this religion without their ‘knowledge or consent,’ as much as any little Independents in the kingdom! ‘The Baptists are as conscientious,’ says Mr. Jenkins, ‘as other denominations, in *praying* for their ‘children; in *teaching* them betimes; and *taking pains* with ‘them; in using *proper arguments*, by the blessing of God, ‘to win upon them; in providing for them; and should they ‘die infants, in *surrendering* them, into the hands of God, with ‘“full confidence” in his goodness, who has a right to reclaim ‘what he gave.’ p. 73. Again, I ask, could infant-sprinkling more effectually bias or bind the youthful heart, than such teachings and arguments in favour of any creed or system—or more powerfully abridge its conscientious liberties in after life?



Mr. Noel speaks of our baptizing children when as 'unconscious as a stone;' and assumes that this is a great absurdity; since, in his opinion, they are not capable of being baptized at all. But is he not aware that the Pharisees are said by our Lord to wash (baptize, *Gr.*) 'cups and pots,' [probably *stone ware*,] 'brassen vessels and tables?' You will remark, that, however superstitious might be the *design* of those hypocritical religionists, the act itself was divinely designated baptism—the baptism of articles as unconscious as a stone. Under the law, the equally unconscious tabernacle and its utensils of gold, silver, brass, and iron were purified or baptized; that is, they were dedicated to God, by being sprinkled with water, or blood. Was this an unmeaning act? was it absurd? was it to be condemned, because the objects, dedicated to God in baptism, were not consenting, intelligent, and possessed of high moral virtues? And if not, wherein lies the inconsistency or unreasonableness of baptizing a child to God, on the ground that, at the time, it is unconscious of what is being done to it, and for its future benefit? The design of the baptism of the tabernacle, and of an infant, varies according to their natures; but both are consecrations to Jehovah—the one for mere passive use, the other for discipleship, and ultimate active service in the house of the Lord. The act of baptism is the same, but the ends vary, according to the nature of their subjects; one being to a higher and the other to a humbler destiny. After viewing the matter in this aspect—probably, Mr. Noel will not regard the baptism of an unconscious babe as a very great absurdity after all!

When Mr. Noel speaks of infants being baptized when 'unconscious as a stone;' he intimates, that there is no cheerful and cordial willingness in them to undergo this rite. But then, there is no unwillingness, no resistance to it, no fear, no repugnance. They are not in great mental or physical opposition to be aspersed or affused at the font. Can this be truly said of all that are dipped into the baptistry, before a staring congregation? Do not many of them, particularly delicately-trained and nervously-constituted females, feel a dread of this operation? Are not numerous persuasive arguments, and even indirect threatenings, occasionally employed to induce them to comply? Are they not told, there can be no proper Christian profession without it; that drawing back would evince a lack of Christian faith, firmness, and love; that it would be refusing to take up the cross and to follow Christ—in the Jordan; that they cannot be joined to the people or



church of God ; with various intimations, that it is necessary to present Christianity, if not to future happiness?—‘ No cross ‘no crown.’ At length, the parties yield, often to such inducements, rather than to an enlightened conviction of its scriptural necessity. Sleepless nights precede the operation. How gladly would they be dipped by proxy ! They have little knowledge on the subject. But the minister, and deacons, and members, say it is necessary ; and they give in. There is nothing cordial, voluntary, or cheerful in the transaction in numerous instances. They go to the font, as some go to the altar to marry persons they really do not love ! Where, then, is the marvellous difference between baptizing an unconscious infant, or a reluctant, timid, and nervous young woman ? And when she faints in the water, or in the arms of the administrator, becoming as insensible of all that is said to, and passing around, her ; surely an unconscious baby, is quite as cordial a subject !

At a recent gathering of Baptists, in London, Dr. Evans is reported to have said, among other striking things, that ‘ Con-  
‘ cession after concession is being made, that the gospel has ‘ nothing to do with infants.’ Who are making these concessions, we are not informed. Nor does the speaker say, from what facts he infers this concession, so adverse to Infant Baptism. He, doubtless, thinks there is much ; and his auditors—whether they cheered him or not—most probably were of the same opinion. Now, the Doctor cannot mean, that the gospel does not say any thing *about* infants. That seems impossible. The argument against baby-sprinkling is, that the gospel says nothing *to* infants directly on the subject—enjoining them to seek for baptism, or cheerfully to submit to it ! What a marvellous discovery of our learned opponent ! and what a conclusive testimony against Infant Baptism ! Ye unguarded Pedobaptist ministers and writers, the authors of such damaging concessions, see what a handle you have given Dr. Evans and his learned brethren ! If you had stood to it, that the gospel had something to say *to* infants, as monthly nurses talk to them, about their sweet little eyes and fingers ; you would have saved us the labour of meeting his potent argumentation ! But, soberly ; the Doctor’s assertion contains a slip or a trick. The gospel has to do with *infants as such*, through their parents or guardians ; and through them only. And what God wishes to be done to, or by, them he informs their seniors, and not themselves. He has something to do with oxen and sheep, through their owners. The gospel

has nothing to do with the Doctor's *hearers as such*; but speaks to them through himself from the pulpit. This boasted concession amounts to nothing; and to plead it against our practice is absurd. And, yet, as the reader has already seen, or will soon see, it is equal to most of the grave objections paraded by our earnest brethren, in opposition to Infant Baptism, not excepting even Mr. Noel's unconscious baby!

OBJECTION XI. *Infant Baptism is the foundation of Popery and of all national establishments of Christianity*, and therefore could not have been of God.—Dr. Gill calls it, 'The pillar and ground of Popery.' Mr. Gibbs says, 'The theory of Pedobaptism is only adapted to the constitution of a national church; it has a manifest tendency to unite the church and the world, and is therefore necessarily opposed to the spirit and principles of dissent.' p. 232. Mr. Keach says, 'I look upon Infant Baptism to be one of the chief pillars of the Romish church and of all national churches and constitutions in the European world.' p. 234. This kind of objection, like several others, to Infant Baptism, is not always made because it is regarded as valid, and relevant to the object; but because it is calculated to prejudice weak and unreflecting minds against the service.

Our opponents cannot be ignorant of the fact, that voluntary churches, of evangelical principles, and of the Pedobaptist order, have ever been among the most zealous and active antagonists to popery and all state-endowed and politically-governed systems of Christianity; and that, too, without imagining the least inconsistency in such opposition. They, moreover, are as competent to understand the legitimate tendency of their own practices, as any persons opposed to their religious movements. For example, the Protestant Pedobaptist churches in North America are as much opposed to popery, and state-governed and parliamentary-sustained prelacy, as any Baptist in that portion of the world. If they were not so, how happens it, that while exercising a very commanding influence in the country, they have not, at least, made the attempt to subject their churches to his Holiness at Rome, or to place them under the power, and in the pay, of the President and the legislative congress? If the objection have any weight or truth in it, how are we to account for the well-attested historical fact, that among the sturdiest opponents of popery, and state-establishments of Christianity, in this land, during the Commonwealth and Protectorate, as well as ever since, have been nonconforming Pedobaptists?

But were it true, that Infant Baptism, as administered by Catholics and State Episcopalians, was the foundation of their systems; it does not necessarily follow, that this rite, as administered among Evangelical Nonconformists, must have the like tendency. Preaching may be the foundation of error and superstition in certain places, and as performed by some ministers of religion; but must it, therefore, be the same among all denominations? Because Catholics and Churchmen baptize babes, as well as men and women, must it be concluded, that whoever besides baptize infants must virtually be Catholics or Churchmen, or approximating closely toward them? Must it be assumed, that because papists and Puseyites, from the pulpit and the press, are said to pronounce mere morality and their childish mummeries, to be meritorious and saving acts in the sight of God; that, therefore, all who preach, though it be salvation by faith in Christ, and universal obedience to God, founded on a feeling of love or a sense of duty, must be papists or Puseyites also? However we deplore the unscriptural notions and forms of baptism, to which our opponents refer; and think them most pernicious in their tendencies and results; we cannot regard them, or any other ceremonial observances, as the principal basis of the systems so earnestly objected to. As before shown, children, on account of their baptism, among Catholics and Churchmen, are not regarded as members of their inner churches, till confirmed by a Diocesan Bishop. There is a foundation still underlying the evils attached to this rite among them—a lust of power, prerogative, patronage, and glory, in both priests and princes. Destroy this spirit, and both popery and state-episcopacy would soon fall, even were Infant Baptism far more prevalent than it is already in our world.

Mr. Stovel comes out very strong on this favourite topic. ‘Dissenting Pedobaptists are found, who burst with spleen when spoken of as participating in Tractarianism; and yet by the benefits they ascribe to Infant and promiscuous Baptism, convey the very same principle into their institutions. They do not seem to me’ [on a very merciful review of their case! to be] ‘dishonest, but rather victims of their own reasonings and neglect of Scripture. Before the ceremony of Infant Baptism can be relieved from this alliance with Baptismal Regeneration, and “the *opus operatum* of Popery,” it must be exhibited to mankind as absolutely *useless*; and before our baptism comports with Scripture, that useless

‘ceremony must be altogether laid aside. It is with all’ [denominations of Pedobaptists,] ‘therefore, we have to do. ‘Call them by what name you will, persons admitting *regeneration* in baptism, *pardon* in baptism, *justification* in baptism, *sealing* in baptism, *induction* by baptism, *recognition* in baptism, *dedication* in baptism, or whatever you please; ‘those supposed sacramental benefits associated with the ‘baptism of infants and unbelievers, the brethren with whom ‘I have the honour to be united, most solemnly denounce as ‘altogether unsustained by divine authority.’ *Reg. Lect. i. p. 30, 31.* You can but notice, that the mere dedication of an infant to God in baptism is here placed on a par with teaching the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration! Must not a Lecturer have some side-end to answer before he would make such a statement? and must he not have presumed greatly on the ignorance and prejudice of his audience before he ventured on such a sentiment? Then, he classes infants with un- or dis-believers! Why, none baptize such persons, but our opponents themselves! and nearly half they baptize, according to their own showing, have not the faith of God’s elect, and are unconverted to God.

It should be observed, that whatever support popery and state-establishments of religion derive from Infant Baptism; they certainly did not give rise to the rite. That our state-episcopacy is of modern origin, no one questions—being little more than 300 years old—and that Infant Baptism existed before the Reformation will be as readily admitted. When genuine popery was first founded, I believe, no one has fully ascertained; but, at any rate, in its present form, it certainly is not so ancient as Infant Baptism. Some hundreds of years are allowed to have elapsed from the death of Christ before the setting up of the dominion of the Man of Sin. Mr. Stovel says, that, in Cyprian’s time, about the middle of the third century, ‘The genius of popery had already generated, ‘and thenceforward it ceased not to unfold its mysterious ‘resources in criminality and spiritual oppression.’ *Regen. Lect. ii. p. 12.* The growth was gradual—the development slow—though even in Paul’s day the evil spirit or germ of popery had begun to work. But it is universally agreed, that the popery to which our objectors refer, dates some four or five hundred years after the Saviour’s birth. Now, it is admitted, by all parties, that Infant Baptism was of much earlier date than that, and could not have sprung out of this system, however perverted by it. About 300 years after



the apostles, Austin wrote, 'That infants are by all Christians 'acknowledged to stand in need of baptism, which must be 'for original sin, since they have no other.' In the time of Cyprian, about 250 years after the birth of Christ, a council of sixty-six ministers unanimously agreed that baptism need not be delayed till the eighth day. This rite, therefore, was universal about 150 years after the apostles. About 100 years after their decease, Tertullian, entertaining a notion, that sin after baptism was nearly unpardonable, advises that Infant Baptism should be deferred till children were grown up, and that young women should not be baptized till after they were married, except the life of the child or female was in danger. Hence, Infant Baptism existed and prevailed in his day, or his superstitious notions about it would have had no existence.

Origen, who was born within a 100 years of the apostles, writes, 'The baptism of children is given for the forgiveness 'of sins; but why are infants, by the usage of the church, 'baptized, if they have nothing that wants forgiveness? . . . It 'is because, by the sacrament of baptism, the pollution of our 'birth is taken away, that infants are baptized . . . The church 'had also from the apostles an order to give baptism to infants.' Ireneus, who was probably born before the death of John the Apostle, says, 'Christ came to save those who, by him, are 'regenerated unto God' (that is according to the sense of the early Christian writers, baptized,) 'both infants, and little ones, 'and young men, and elderly persons.' Justin Martyr, who wrote about 40 years after the apostolic age, says, in a passage previously quoted, 'several persons among us, both men and 'women, of sixty or seventy years old, who were proselyted or 'made disciples to Christ in or from their infancy, do continue 'uncorrupt.' Seventy years back, from Justin Martyr, bring us nearly into the middle of the apostolic age. *Wall's Hist.* vol. 1. Dr. Tyerman says, 'Let it be observed, that the 'term regeneration is often used in the fathers for baptism; 'with what propriety, is no concern of mine. I need only 'quote the words of two of them to prove this. Thus Ireneus: '—"When Christ gave his disciples the command of regene- 'rating unto God, he said, Go teach all nations baptizing them 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy 'Ghost." The following are the words of Justin Martyr, who was 'contemporary with Ireneus—"They are regenerated in the 'same way in which we have been regenerated, for they are 'washed with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and 'the Holy Ghost.'" p. 82.



These passages render it unquestionable that baptism existed long before popery—understanding by this term the system of religion which has long passed under that name; and it is simply to prove this fact that I have transcribed the above quotations from the afore-named Christian fathers of the church. Whether these ancient writers had correct views of the baptism of either adults or children is immaterial to my present object. That Infant Baptism existed and was prevalent, if not universal, within a few years of the death of John the Apostle, is unquestionable. How it became so, if it had never been practised by inspired men, and especially if it had been repudiated and condemned by them, as it is by our opponents, I leave the latter to divine. But, not requiring the glosses of the Rabbis, nor the practices of the fathers, to establish my doctrine of Infant Baptism, under the New Testament economy, I shall not lay any further stress on the above authorities, than to sustain my assumption, that Infant Baptism is not the offspring of popery or of a state-religion; though, when perverted, it may have been made to harmonise with its dogmas, and minister to its continuance, among their unenlightened supporters.

Mr. Hall assumes, that the practice of Infant Baptism was introduced towards the end of the second or the beginning of the third century; and that it obtained a ‘complete and ‘undisputed ascendancy’ towards the close of the fourth. Yet, he says, the ancient church, which he supposes continued to practise only adult baptism, never made any serious demur against the innovations of the Pedobaptists. He asks, ‘Did ‘they separate from their brethren in order to form distinct and ‘exclusive societies? Of this, not the faintest trace or vestige ‘is to be found in Ecclesiastical history, and the supposition ‘is completely confuted by the concurrent testimony of ancient ‘writers to the universal incorporation of orthodox Christians ‘in one grand community. We challenge our opponents’ [the close communionists] ‘to produce the shadow of evidence in ‘favour of the existence, during that long tract of time, of a ‘single society of which adult baptism was the distinguishing ‘characteristic.’ p. 304.

This quotation teaches us two or three important truths. (1) That in very early times Infant Baptism was not regarded by the good men of those days with the same dislike and abhorrence which are felt against it, by most of the Baptists in the present day; or they certainly would have made a notorious stir about it. (2) That it is among the strange events of the

world, that a rite should have sprung up, within little more than a hundred years after the apostolic age, so contrary to the supposed spirit and genius of the gospel, and so injurious to the souls of mankind, as our opponents regard it, without being denounced as an innovation, and as altogether contrary to the practice of the first ministers of Christ—for even Tertullian no where speaks of it as unscriptural or as a novel invention! And (3) that, in the course of two centuries more, Infant Baptism should have obtained a complete and undisputed ascendancy in the Christian world, had it been viewed as adverse to the mind and doings of the apostles and their successors, is truly marvellous! It is easy to account for false notions being attributed to this ordinance, as there were to the Lord's supper; but to suppose, that the rite itself should have originated and universally prevailed, in so brief a space of time, without any manifest and recorded opposition, on Scriptural grounds, is beyond our capacity—the fact is unparalleled in the history of ecclesiastical operations.

I will here cite the language of an Anonymous writer. 'For an hundred years after the death of the apostles, their authority was sufficient, our brethren acknowledge, to keep such an *innovation* from entering the church. They therefore usually place the introduction of this practice about the beginning of the third century. But behold! in the short space of about *two hundred years*, without a single *precept* or warrant, or a single *example* to encourage it, yea, with the well-known practice of the *apostles* themselves, and of *all the churches* they ever planted throughout the whole world, confessedly, openly, directly *against it*; under all these disadvantages, the baptism of infants, it seems, so *every where* prevailed, that upon the face of the whole earth there was not a church found where it was not performed! To him that believes this, what can be incredible!' p. 11. Byron says, the first invention of this antiscritptural and flesh-pleasing error commenced in Africa, was occasionally practised in the second century, and, 'before the end of the third century, it had become literally universal.' p. 65. What a rapid and marvellous spread of such a wicked rite in so short a time! Were there no intelligent and faithful followers of Christ then left in the world to oppose or protest against it!

Mr. Gibbs advances rather a singular objection to Infant Baptism, which may be worth noting in this place. He says, 'it practically denies the doctrine of personal election and particular redemption, for there can be no election to a

‘particular benefit of which all are partakers ; this universality of grace is strongly implied in the administration of Infant Baptism....which, traced to its source, and followed by its legitimate consequences, will be found to arise out of the most subtle system of Arminian policy ever devised ; and to be the most powerful practical expedient for supporting and propagating the doctrines of universal grace and general redemption, within the compass of human agency. It proceeds upon the general principle, not only that all men are alike eligible to salvation, but that *grace*, of which baptism is the outward sign and seal, is conferred upon all men.’ 240. No doubt, this phase of the matter will be very gratifying to our Arminian friends ! and if they credit Mr. Gibbs, it will surely induce them to cleave more closely to the practice of baptizing infants ! But how does our High Calvinistic opponent make out his case ? The last sentence in the citation tells us, that it assumes ‘all men to be alike eligible to salvation.’ But can it be proved that all are not so ; and, then, can our opponents point out who really are, that they only may be baptized ? Or would he, like Tombes and Noel, argue that no infants should receive the rite, lest some non-elected babies might unfortunately partake of the benefit ! And would he carry out this cautious procedure, and dip no adult, lest he should perchance dip a hypocrite or an unregenerate convert !

This, however, is only a moiety of the mischief. Baptism is the outward sign and seal of grace ; and it intimates that this is conferred on all that undergo this ceremony ! But what does our good brother mean by the outward *seal* of grace—that Protestant Pedobaptists regard all they baptize as having saving, regenerating, sanctifying grace assured to the children they baptized ? If so, we say, he was grossly ignorant of our principles, or knowingly misrepresented them, like his friends Messrs. Craps, Draper, and others, previously quoted. And if he were not, and meant that baptism is merely a token of God’s mercy to a sinful world, a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the introductory rite to the external privileges of Christian instruction—of itself neither securing nor assuring grace to any—it would puzzle a very wise head to discover what it has to do with particular redemption or the universality of regenerating grace.

Besides, could Mr. Gibbs or his brethren prove, that all, or even half, they dip, are personally elected to eternal life ? If not, does not his argument tell against their own doings equally as against ours ? To be consistent with their own

notions, ought they not to obtain some special token from heaven, pointing out who, for certain, are really the elect of the Lord? Alas! what some rash partizans of a system will occasionally advance in its defence! Might he not also have brought it as a charge against us, that we train up the young in the principles of religion, and use our best efforts, and offer up our fervent prayers, for the salvation of their souls; as this equally tends to defeat the purposes of God's election, as baptizing them, or dedicating them to God? Most thinking people would answer yes, a great deal more so; and that all the pious and godly ministers, parents, and people in his own denomination are doing as much in this way as those who practise baby-sprinkling!

He says, further, 'It is the prominent doctrine of those national establishments which pronounce every subject of their spiritual jurisdiction a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Thus it is we find personal election, particular redemption, and justification denied by the Romish and episcopalian clergy in general; for how can they hold doctrines so subversive of the opinion that every child is made a subject of grace by Baptism.' p. 240. Here, like his friends above named, he confounds the rite with its abuse; and which perversion, in the English and Romish churches, applies to adult as clearly and fully as to Infant Baptism. The state-religion, oddly enough, maintains personal election and baptismal regeneration also; and yet its clergy, somehow, are not so puzzled in the affair as our opponents imagine. The regenerating grace of baptism they think may be lost, and, at last, of course, its predestinated subjects also! But, as we attach no such virtues to the rite, we are not answerable for the errors of those that do; and it is most unjust to attribute the consequences of their system to ours.

OBJECTION. XII. *As Infant Baptism is not plainly commanded, nor clearly exemplified, in the New Testament, it is certainly prohibited.*—It is further argued, that duties enjoined under former economies, or practised by inspired saints, before the coming of Christ, can be no rule or directory to us, under the gospel dispensation. Here, it is to be noted, that if this objection be founded on a correct canon of Scriptural interpretation, it must apply universally; otherwise, the principle must be vicious and false; and, therefore, cannot necessarily apply to Infant Baptism, any more than to other acts and declarations found in the Old Testament. Well, then,



in no part of the New Testament is it positively enjoined, or clearly exemplified, by the apostles or any of the first Christians, with the manifest approbation of God, that the ministers of Christ did officiate at a marriage, or at a funeral, or preach from a pulpit, or preside at the Lord's table, or receive pew-rents, or regular salaries, or allowed females to sit down with men at the eucharist, or kept or encouraged Sunday schools, or Bible classes, or supported Bible or Tract societies, or erected any places for Christian worship, or held regular week-day meetings for social prayer, or were designated Reverend, or had organs and musical instruments in their religious services, or sunk baptistries in places of worship, or provided garments especially for baptismal occasions. Hence, all these, and many other deeds and practices, among our opponents, must be regarded as unscriptural, unwarranted, and prohibited, and should be resisted by all the means in their power—because they are not plainly taught, nor clearly exemplified, in the New Testament!

To rejoin, that these things may be tolerated, as being in accordance with the genius and design of the gospel, or may be sustained by the practices of the Hebrew economy, which was abrogated only in part, or may be supported by the procedure of the early post-apostolical churches; is to surrender at once the validity of the objection; leaving us at liberty to recur to the Old Testament, or to the spirit of the New, or to the testimony of the Christian fathers, for direct or indirect evidence in defence of Infant Baptism; though in the letter of the gospel itself, there might be neither a positive command, nor a clear example, in its favour. It may be added, that on the principle plainly involved in this objection, though on an inverse application of it, we should be led to the conclusion, that all the apostles did or sanctioned, in their peculiar circumstances, down to the minutest acts and operations of their procedure, must be done by all their ministerial successors, in the present day; and that to omit one jot or tittle of them would be iniquitous! All we require, is a fair and legitimate exposition and application of the Word of God, as a whole—carrying out the spirit and genius of it through all our Christian and ministerial operations. And if, by this course, we can defend Infant Baptism; or if, by similar means of scriptural interpretation, our opponents cannot effectually oppose it; we think that all intelligent and honourable men will readily award a verdict in our favour.

Mr. Noel argues, that the silence of Scripture 'respecting

‘the baptism of infants, affords the stronger evidence, that  
‘infants were not then baptized, because, had they been  
‘required to be baptized, the churches needed information on  
‘so many points respecting it. . . . and, lastly, after parents had  
‘baptized their children, what could be more useful or more  
‘necessary, than to recal to Christian parents the stipulations  
‘which they had made for their children at the time of their  
‘baptism? Yet, this is not once done.’ *Sub.* p. 245, 246.  
But, in the first place, I deny that the Scriptures are silent on  
the subject of Infant Baptism. Such general terms are  
employed as necessarily refer to, and include, them when the  
subject of baptism is the topic of exposition. When the  
inspired penmen speak of a whole nation, all the Jews, all the  
people, in reference to the safety, danger, protection, and  
supplies of them indiscriminately and without exception; are  
not children included, necessarily and always? Are they not  
referred to equally with youths in their teens and with men  
in old age; with maidens of twenty and matrons of eighty;  
with the poor and the rich; with the godly and the unbeliever?  
In the expressions, all the people, the whole nation, the  
different classes of adults are not mentioned any more than the  
infant community—and it might be said, with equal truth,  
that the Scriptures are as silent respecting men and women, as  
respecting infants. To argue, that the incapacity of children  
to receive the baptismal rite, or to meet the claims that rite  
involves, is to beg the question, and to assume the point to be  
established. Certain it is, that the language of inspiration is  
not silent concerning the young when speaking of Baptism—  
unless it can be proved, from other data, that it necessarily  
and purposely excludes them.

In the next place, I remark, that were dipping the proper  
mode of baptism, is it not strange that there should not be  
definite and extensive instruction given, as to the manner of  
its performance—that the information should be so vague,  
that men equally learned, sincere, devout, and holy, should see  
it differently—some believing that dipping is right, and others  
that sprinkling only is proper? Mr. Noel himself does not  
decide concerning the proper mode of baptizing from the words  
used in the New Testament, or from the circumstances in  
which the act was administered by John and the apostles; but  
from what the comparatively modern Rabbis tell us respecting  
the mode of ancient proselyte baptism! or from inferences  
drawn from the writings of Moses and the prophets. He  
thinks there was no need of specific instruction in the New

Testament, as the mode was so well and so generally known before hand, from the practice of the Jews. Well, then, were not the proper subjects of baptism as fully understood as the mode; and needed there more minute directions on the one head than on the other? Were not people previously conversant with the duties of parents towards the young persons circumcised and baptized to Judaism; and would they not thence naturally infer how the little proselytes to Christianity were also to be trained up and dealt with? If the former baptisms were sufficiently instructive, as to the mode, why not as to the subjects? Assuredly, there was no more difficulty in the one case than in the other. Certainly, Mr. Noel has not proved the contrary.

Again, it is assumed, that adults only were to be baptized under the gospel economy. But could no questions fairly arise respecting what kinds of persons were to undergo this ceremony? Might it not be asked, whether both sexes, and above what ages, might be safely baptized? Whether they must be first regenerated by the Spirit, or whether a simple profession of it would do, to render the ceremony valid and abiding? And, then, are all the baptized to be admitted to the Lord's supper at once, or are they first to be further trained and proved? Is this baptism the act of the minister, or of the church, or of both? Now, if adult baptism only be scriptural, how is it that these necessary questions, and many kindred ones, about most of which our opponents themselves are at issue, are not so clearly answered, that no difference of opinion could reasonably exist among wise and good men concerning them? And as they are confessedly not all cleared up in the New Testament, does not this render it equally suspicious, whether this adult baptism was to be more than a temporary or occasional rite in the beginning of the Gospel dispensation?

Here, however, our brethren present us with their own solution. The baptized proselyte to Judaism must have been a believer, a penitent, and keep the whole law afterwards, and enjoy all the religious privileges of the seed of Abraham. We also maintain that proselyte baptism was the immediate precursor of Christian baptism. In this, our leading opponents fully agree. And both its subjects and modes must have been perfectly understood by, and familiar to, the Hebrews, in the days of Christ. No particular explanation or fresh instruction was required, any more than a new exposition of the fourth commandment, or a minute account of the ancient

passover, as instituted in Egypt. Baptism was baptism, as preaching was preaching, in every age of the church. Hence, Infant Baptism might have been common among the early Hebrew Christians, without its being explained anew to them by the apostles, whether the children of only a class, or of any specific character, were to be so dedicated to God, or how the act was to be followed out by their parents or the ministers of the gospel. I repeat, proselyte infant circumcision and baptism being admitted, as it is and must be by all who have dispassionately and carefully looked into the subject; we conclude, that if these rites were well understood and prevalent, before John appeared, and even during our Lord's ministry; the fact of so little being said about them by the apostles and evangelists, as to the exact persons to be baptized, and the way in which the rite was to be performed, is easily accounted for, and affords a ready and clear solution of the difficulties of the question. The same persons, as to age, sex, and relationship, would be baptized; and the same mode as previously would be adopted. Whether that mode were dipping or sprinkling, is not now the question; nor is the point to be decided by what the Jewish Rabbis advance; but by the Word of God, either plainly expressed or fairly implied. An appeal to this sacred record satisfies us, that, both as to the subjects and the mode, we are perfectly in the right.

I might further ask the objector, If the baptism of a *trained-up and truly converted Christian* be not plainly commanded and clearly exemplified in the New Testament, is it not certainly prohibited? Now, it is an unquestionable fact, that the baptism of such persons is never enjoined nor recorded in the Word of God. All the grown-up subjects of apostolic baptism were certainly Jews or Heathens when first initiated by this rite to Christianity, as soon as they heard, and were brought to believe, the truth of the gospel. Usually, there was not the delay of a year, a month, a week, or a day, between their conversion to the religion of Christ and their baptism. This being the case, on what authority are people, who have been regularly brought up in the school of Christianity, and converted in after life, baptized by our objectors? They cannot find either precedent or precept for such an act; nor have they a tithe of the inferential evidence in favour of it, that we have in support of baptizing the children of baptized parents. If, therefore, the want of a plain command and a clear instance, in our case, be a valid prohibition; surely the want of the like, in respect of what may be properly termed



*a Christian's baptism*, must be a valid prohibition of such baptisms as prevail among our opponents! They also tell us that 'if believers' baptism be right, Infant Baptism is wrong.' We reply, if the baptism of a Jew or of a heathen be right, then the baptism of a trained-up Christian, by the same rule, must be wrong. And we might, on the same grounds, argue, that if Infant Baptism be right, Adult Baptism is wrong. In fact, I do not hesitate to say, that *if the Scriptures are to be our guide, nine-tenths of the subjects of baptism, among our opposing brethren, are wrong subjects; and that they are acting contrary to the practice of Christ and his apostles, in baptizing them.*—Let them prove the like of Infant Baptism, if they can!

OBJECTION XIII. *Positive institutions, cannot be established by inference or analogical reasonings*, but must depend on the will of the Saviour, revealed in express precepts. Dr. W. Newman: 'If the divine commission does not include,' infants, 'it excludes them. For by the nature of the case, 'positive laws imply a negative; what is not required is 'forbidden.' p. 23. Mr. Noel: 'From our Lord's naming 'believers as the proper subjects of baptism, it is plain that 'none others must be baptized, unless Christian ministers have 'his authority expressed or *implied* to baptize them.' *Sub.* p. 43. Here Mr. Noel's proviso neutralizes Dr. Newman's assertion; though still inculcating the same object! Mr. Gibbs: 'Analogical 'evidence, which can never amount to more than possible pre-'sumption, or mere probability, should not be admitted as 'authority in the worship of God; and *we* maintain that no 'ordinance should be recognized as divinely appointed, upon 'any evidence short of demonstrative proof.' p. 317. Mr. Booth: 'As the sovereign will of God is more concerned and manifested 'in positive ordinances than in any other branches of holy 'worship; so it is evident from the history of the Jewish 'Church, that the divine jealousy was never sooner inflamed, 'nor ever more awfully expressed, than when God's ancient 'people failed in their obedience to such commands, or deviated 'from the prescribed rule of such institutions. The destruction 'of Nadab and Abihu by fire from heaven; the breach that 'was made upon Uzzah; the stigma fixed and the curses 'denounced on Jeroboam; together with the fall and ruin of 'all mankind by our father's disobedience to a positive 'command, are among the many authentic proofs of this 'assertion....Accursed then is the principle, and rebellious 'is the conduct, of those professors who think themselves

‘warranted by the grace of the gospel to trifle with God’s ‘positive appointments, any more than the priests or the ‘people were of old.’ Consequently, as in the opinion of Mr. Booth and his brethren, Infant Baptism is a deviation from the prescribed rule of the positive institution of Baptism; its abettors may well look out for the vengeance of Heaven to rest upon them and their ungodly rite! If Pedobaptists are not frightened out of their practice, Mr. Booth will not be to blame for their mental equanimity.

In replying to these objections, I cannot do better than commence by citing the language of an able anonymous writer: ‘This is the principal pillar our plunging brethren have to ‘support their hypothesis against us. Now, if we can remove ‘this huge pillar, their building must come to the ground. ‘Well, this we can easily do, by following their own *principles* ‘and *practice*. It is well known by all intelligent Christians, ‘that the institution of the Lord’s supper is a *positive* ordinance, ‘and that no *express* command is given for *females* to partake ‘of it, as none but *men* were present at its first institution, ‘and the command is only *expressly* given to men. See 1 Cor. ‘xi. 28. Yet, your plunging brethren will very justly prove ‘from Scripture, that females ought to partake of it. But ‘how do they prove this? Exactly in the same way, as we ‘do Infant Baptism, by *inference*, or from passages of Scripture ‘from which it may be fairly inferred. For instance, they ‘justly show, from Gal. iii. 28, that male and female are all ‘one in Christ; that women are included, in the common ‘gender of man, in the passage already noted, 1 Cor. xi. 28, ‘and also from 1 Timothy ii. 5, in which women (and here we also ‘add infants too) are included in the mediation of Christ in ‘the same gender of man, or mankind, the species of human ‘beings. Now, observe the proof is not *express*, but fairly ‘drawn by *inference*; and, besides, our plunging brethren ‘have no *positive* or *express Scripture* warrant to keep the ‘Sabbath or the first day of the week; yet they do not consider ‘a positive command necessary to warrant their practice in ‘this as well as in many other religious services, but establish ‘the propriety of their conduct by drawing fair inferences. ‘Now, if they allow *themselves* this reasonable privilege, is it ‘not exceedingly unfair in them to deny *us* the same?’

It is observable, that while our brethren are so scrupulous and rigid in adhering to the letter of the law, when Infant Baptism is to be opposed; they can not only surrender positive Scripture testimony to their antagonists, but even

sanction what they deem erroneous opinions and practices for party purposes. Mr. Noel says, 'It is well known that many churches admit to the Lord's table none who are unbaptized' [by dipping.] 'In my opinion this practice is erroneous; but as it is sanctioned by the practice of nearly all Christian churches,' [who hold adult baptism,] 'it should be respected as the result of conscientious conviction, rather than be treated as an offence.' p. 296. Will Mr. Noel, or any of his open-communionist brethren, reason in the same tolerant spirit respecting the dedication of infants to God in baptism? Surely, the errors of both practices, should not appear to be so widely different, even in his own view, when good old Dr. Ryland could see no objection to ours, but the want of a plain warrant from the Word of God! p. 23. Mr. Noel adds, 'one who was sprinkled in his infancy has not in his passive reception of that rite either complied with the form or fulfilled the reality of baptism....he is, therefore, unbaptized.... There is no instance in the New Testament of any person who was converted to Christ, after he commissioned his disciples to baptize, coming to the Lord's table unbaptized.' p. 290. Yet, abandoning Christian precedent, the erroneous practice of admitting undipped persons to the Lord's table is, it seems, practised in his own church, and in that of numerous other Baptist ministers! Why, I inquire, is conscience so rigid in the one case, and so reckless in the other? Can it possibly be, that sectarian considerations, numerical displays, seat-rents, and subscriptions, have any thing to do with this diversity of operations? For, surely, to sprinkle a baby in baptism cannot be more dangerous, than admitting persons to the Lord's supper, who have no scriptural right to be there!

In their attempts to prove exclusive adult believers' baptism, by immersing the subject in water; our opponents invariably and necessarily employ inference in their procedure, whether always conscious of it or not. Indeed, the assumptions on which they build their scheme are far more numerous than we employ in defending Infant Baptism by affusion; and many of the former are of the most gratuitous kind, as the reader of their works, on this head, cannot fail to discover. However, the question here is, not so much, whether they or we have the better ground for our respective inferences, as whether such a mode of argumentation is appropriate to the matter under consideration? The motives of the Baptists for objecting to inferential proofs in the case in question are evident. A few passages, superficially regarded, appear to

speak in their favour; and in their plain literal import, are supposed to tell against our practice, especially in the minds of the unreflecting. Hence, there must be no meddling with them lest the spell be broken, and its effect be lost on the mind of the masses!

Mr. Keach remarks, 'When Christ in the affirmative declares, who he would have baptized; doth it not follow that in the negative, none else ought to be baptized' [but those that *believe*?] 'In other cases you would not argue thus, as for example, when God commanded Abraham to circumcise his male infants, doth he not implicitly *forbid* the circumcising of his female children? And when he commanded him to circumcise them on the eighth day, doth he not implicitly forbid him to circumcise them on the seventh or ninth day?....Are not all those persons that a testator, in his last will and testament, leaveth out, or expresseth not, excluded from any legacy in the said will? Now, the great commission, Matt. xxviii., Mark xvi., is also Christ's last will and testament, about the right of baptism, viz.: who are right subjects, and they are expressed by their qualifications, viz.: disciples, or persons taught, or such that believe, &c.' p. 229. Now, if Mr. Keach's premises were valid, his inferences would be indisputable. Had the commission run, 'baptize intelligent and godly adults who believe with the heart the gospel of Christ;' and had there been no prior custom, nor collateral expressions in the Scriptures, to modify the language; no true and sincere follower of Christ would ever have thought of baptizing babies, any more than of marrying them at three years of age. But, unfortunately for the argument of our opponent, the commission simply states, that disciples or proselytes are to be baptized; and we learn that children may be such; and we know, too, that such had long been the subjects of this initiatory rite. In no instance is it declared, he that believeth is converted, and fully instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, and walks worthy of his high vocation, may, or shall, be baptized with water. All that we can gather from the sacred records, is that such people, not previously baptized to Christ, should not be denied this rite, and that some such actually underwent it. Baptism is no more confined to the believer, or to the converted, or to the penitent, than salvation is limited to them. The only text that seems to render faith prerequisite to baptism, (Mark xvi. 16, of which more hereafter,) makes it equally prerequisite to future happiness; and would as certainly keep children out of heaven,



as from the baptismal font. Therefore, such an interpretation of it must unquestionably be erroneous.

No person will question, that the disciples to whom our Lord verbally delivered his last commission fully understood his intention, or that they failed to act upon it in their subsequent ministrations. Nor will it be doubted, that whenever they baptized the believing heads of a family *at home*, they always baptized their families with them—at the same time, and in the same way—whatever were the sex or age of the latter; we may therefore conclude, that, to baptize families, formed one sense of our Lord's command. Now, let it be supposed, that what the disciples understood by the commission, had been literally expressed in it, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach'—proselyte—all families, baptizing them in the name, &c.' This constitutes a clearly implied clause in our Lord's last will and testament. The preceding practice of domestic proselytism and baptism would be regarded as a key to open the precise nature of the injunction; and the following practice of the apostles plainly evinces how they construed our Lord's intentions. They must have felt that they were as positively enjoined to baptize families as nations, or nations by families. There is only *one* commission, comprehending baptism, given by our Lord. In this there is not a word about spiritual conversion, saving faith, or the acquisition of scriptural knowledge. The people were to be made disciples, proselyted to Christianity, or brought over to the Christian religion, and then baptized and taught. All this is plain, and the consecration of families was manifestly the result. Tombes says, 'The institution appoints only disciples of all nations to be baptized; but infants are not such; therefore the institution doth not warrant their baptism.' p. 152. The assertion that infants are not or cannot be disciples is false, as will afterwards appear. Why may they not be disciples as much as the untaught heathens, whom the apostles baptized after preaching to them a sermon of less than an hour long, or immediately after the performance of some miracle had induced the astonished gentile to give in his adhesion to Christianity?

Mr. Keach's assertion, that God *forbade* Abraham to circumcise females, for which they were physically incapacitated, is absurd; and was either meant, or calculated, only to impose on the grossly ignorant. He might as consistently have said, God indirectly forbade the Patriarch to furnish them with wings, and, at once, to send them flying over the country. Again, when he adds, God *forbade* the circumcising of children

only on the eighth day ; his assertion is not literally true, and but partially carried out ; nor so understood by God's ancient people ; for probably not a dozen of Abraham's male domestics underwent this rite at that precise period of life. And when the national circumcision took place, in the time of Joshua, hundreds of thousands, above eight days old, must have submitted to this ceremony. Nor is it to be overlooked, that on adult proselytes, from heathenism to the worship of the true God, it was practised on all ages ;—and it is supposed, that at some periods of their history it was done very numerously. The writer's aim appears to have been to make out a striking case of positive law adverse to Infant Baptism ; but it is evidently a positive failure. It is akin to the statements of certain authors on his side of the question, who imagine that because they read of grown-up believers being baptized, therefore, none beside were to undergo the ceremony—being a contracted, partial, and unsatisfactory view of the whole question under consideration. That the circumcision of infants of eight days old was to be the future ordinary rule is plain enough ; just as Infant Baptism was to be the general practice ; though exceptions in both cases were always admissible. It is observable, that when we refer to the circumcision of the Hebrews, in defence of our baptism of infants, we are gravely told, that nothing is to be gathered from that ancient and unique institution on the question. But when any inference can be drawn from it, legitimate or not, against baby-sprinkling, our opponents, as in the instance under notice, avail themselves of it with the highest self-satisfaction.

It may here be proper to remark, that there is no positive law or institution to be found in the Word of God, which does not require reasoning and inference before it can be safely applied by ourselves and our cotemporaries.—Instance the *Lord's Supper*. This is as plain and positive an institution as can be found in the New Testament. But are there not questions arising concerning it, which require a solution ? Is it to be perpetual ? Who may be the communicants ? What kind of bread and wine are to be used ? How often is it to be observed ? What postures are we to assume ? Who may preside on such occasions ? And what is the spiritual design of the ordinance ? On all these particulars different opinions are held by Christian men.—Take the *Gospel Ministry*. What more plain and positive than the divine commission to preach the word ? And yet, how many points

of inquiry present themselves to our minds, before we have fairly come to a safe practical conclusion on the subject? Who now may preach? What endowments or qualifications must preachers possess? Where should they proclaim the Gospel? Must their method be textual or expository? Who is to decide on the preacher's abilities? And how is he to get support?—Take the *Fourth Commandment*. Are we to keep the ancient sabbath, or the first day of the week—out of the Holy Land? When does it begin, at the previous sun-setting, or in the morning of the same day? How are *we* to keep it? What are the works forbidden on it? What religious duties should be performed during its sanctified hours? Is the day unchangeable or not? In what way are its sanctions to be now applied?—Other cases might be mentioned, and other questions proposed. But can any of them be fairly answered, without the exercise of our reasoning and inductive powers, or without recourse being had to other parts of Scripture?

The truth is, that all scriptural institutions are partly moral and partly positive. The ultimate designs of them are readily discoverable; while the mode of conducting them can be gathered only from divine prescriptions. For example: Circumcision, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Sabbath, are positive enactments. Their ultimate purpose, true piety and devotion would naturally aim to accomplish. But the precise modes of effecting it are matters of revelation. Reason would never have found them out. But in carefully attending to the injunctions of Scripture, and exercising the faculties with which we are graciously furnished, we can easily arrive at the knowledge requisite to direct us in performing God's revealed pleasure. Baptism is placed in the category of positive institutions. Concerning the subjects, or those who shall undergo the rite, the manner in which it is to be administered, and the intermediate benefits to be accomplished by it, we must employ our intellects as we would on any other question about which it is possible for honest minds to differ, and to arrive at various or contrary conclusions. It is also well-known, that the strictly literal, is not always the true, import of language. Transubstantiation is based on the phrases, 'This is my body, This is my blood.' All that can be required is a fair, consistent, exposition of the mind of the Holy Spirit, whatever style of expression, or degree of plainness, or method of illustration, he may have employed. Whoever assumes that Infant Baptism is not true, *because* it is not so expressed

in explicit and unmistakeable terms; has yet to learn the laws which govern all holy and intelligent interpretations of the Scriptures of God. When our Lord said to his disciples, 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise;' Luke vi. 31; he recognized and commanded the duty of exercising our faculties in determining, on Christian principles, what we should do in all cases requiring the use of our reasoning powers.

*And why should not Positive Injunctions be regarded in the same light as Positive Institutions*—and be taken in their literal sense, without the intervention of reasoning and inference? I am not aware, that any valid grounds for viewing them in a different manner can be justly assigned by our opponents. Of plain and positive commands, many might be adduced from the Word of God. I will content myself with the following, as a good specimen: 'Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid him not to take thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.' Luke vi. 29, 30. No authority can be higher than that of the Divine Speaker. No terms can be more simple or positive. And the individual application of the language is manifest. Will our Baptist brethren take the text literally? Will they act it out scrupulously? And will they let their views on the point be known generally to their pugnacious and pilfering neighbours! Alas! they will not. They must explain the words; show what they consider the true bearing of them; and adduce certain inferences which may be fairly drawn from them! But why? They contain not a word of reservation, proviso, or hidden purposes. They, in fact, constitute a positive institution on Christian charity and forbearance, as much so as the commission of Christ does respecting Infant Baptism. And while our opponents recur to other parts of the Bible, for the purpose of expounding the former positive declaration; surely they cannot consistently refuse our doing the like, in order to understand the real purport of the latter.

To amplify our previous method of exposing the fallacy of our opponents' objection, I observe, that whether any of them are fully conscious of the fact or not, it is beyond all doubt, that, in order to sustain their own practice, they are incessantly supposing, assuming, inferring, and deducing, and often taking disputable points as granted, both as to the subjects and modes of baptism. For instance, as to *their own Subjects of Baptism*,



let me ask, Were persons to be baptized after the apostolic age of miracles? Were any but the first converts from Judaism and heathenism to be baptized, and not their natural descendants? How much knowledge must precede baptism, and how much left to be acquired afterwards? What confession must the candidates make? What degree of Christian experience and holiness is prerequisite? What is the lowest age when a person may be baptized? What must be believed in order to be regarded as a qualified disciple? How deep must be his repentance for sin? Must he apply for baptism, or must he be applied to? Who is to judge of his qualification, the minister or his people? May a layman administer the rite to the candidates? and is he to be baptized into the general or into the particular church? Take *their own Mode of Baptism*: Did the Jewish proselytes dip themselves, or did the priests dip them; and were the first Christian converts guided by the Jewish practice? Were the candidates dipped naked, or in their ordinary attire, or in dresses made for the occasion? Did the Apostles baptize in the name of the Trinity, or only in the name of Jesus, and which is the proper form of speech now? Were the women dipped separately, or with the men? Did they immerse only in natural streams, or in open reservoirs of water, or also in enclosed artificial baptistries? Must the water touch every part of the body, or will wetting the larger part of it suffice? Are the candidates to be dipped backward or forward, or either way most convenient?

These, and many similar queries might be proposed; indeed, they naturally present themselves to the inquiring mind, while seriously meditating on the question of Baptism; and about the solution of most of them, authors have puzzled their brains, and filled many a quire of valuable paper. And yet, after all, would not our brethren be still put to some considerable amount of reflection before they can fairly and satisfactorily answer them? It involves very little trouble to conclude, at will, that some particular course is right, without taking a broad and minute survey of the entire subject, and seeing what other methods the language may enjoin or tolerate. Our opponents demand of us definite statements and positive evidence in support of the plans we adopt; and yet they can adduce nothing unequivocal and specific in support of their own! They employ criticisms, analogies, and inferences, to defend their own procedure; but when Infant Baptism is to be opposed, we must not exercise our reasoning powers at all;

criticisms must be repudiated; and inferences are totally irrelevant to the subject! How accordant with honorable debate such requirements are, we shall leave it with the reader to determine. How little confidence can they feel in the strength of their own principles and practices, who would, if they could, prevent our arguing the question at issue between us and themselves, as is universally done in other matters of theological difficulty! The fact is, that when hard pressed on this point, Mr. Tombes fully and frankly conceded the untenableness of his previous position. 'I readily grant, that whatever in positive worship is commanded in the New Testament, though it be not in formal terms commanded, yet, if it may be gathered by virtual consequence, ought to be done.' *Exam.* p. 112.

OBJECTION XIV. '*Baptism is the profession of faith, the public confession of Christ, without which confession there is no true faith and no salvation.*' [What, not for infants?] 'So Jesus has himself pronounced, Matt. x. 32, 33; see also Rom. x. 8-10; Rev. xxi. 8. And as the confession of Christ is necessary to salvation,' [what, for infants?] 'so is baptism to those who know that this is the appointed method of confessing him,' [unless there are more ways than one of confessing Christ!] *Noel, Sub.* p. 95. 'A profession of faith is necessary at the beginning of a Christian life, and no act of profession can be more solemn or expressive than this.' [And none more fallacious.] *Ib.* p. 17. 'This day's work,' says Dr. Ryland, on dipping an adult, 'is but the commencement of a public profession of ardent attachment to him that loved you and gave himself for you.' p. 32.—Now, suppose the Dr. had dipped an individual who had been a pious member of an Independent or Wesleyan church for many years past; had long been a Sunday-school teacher; a tract distributor; a visitor of the sick; and had taken an active part in their church and prayer meetings;—but who had just altered his views on the mode of baptism—how oddly would the above declaration have sounded! Or suppose that when Mr. Noel was dipped, the like phraseology had been used concerning him! How would the spectators have lifted up their hands and eyes in astonishment!—thinking, probably, aloud: 'What, did he never make a public profession of ardent attachment to Christ before now? Is this the beginning of his Christian life?' And, yet, the notion is inculcated and common, that no real profession of love to God, or of faith in Christ, is made, but at the baptism! What! do not Pedit-baptist ministers, missionaries, members of Christian societies,

and benevolent and laborious disciples of our blessed Saviour, make a public, a full, and an unequivocal confession and profession of religion in their lives, worship, work, and at the table of the Lord, as effectually and devoutly, as any other persons do when dipped in a baptistry or a river?

That our opponents require a profession of faith and a confession of Christ, in their candidates for baptism, we all know. The latter are questioned concerning their conversion, experience, doctrines, views of church government, and modes of life; sometimes very minutely and rigidly; and, in some instances, satisfactory answers are returned, before immersion is administered to the parties. But what authority does the Word of God afford for such investigations and replies? That adults, at the first, before submitting to the ordinance of baptism, believed Christ to have been the Messiah, and tacitly, at least, professed to cleave to him, as the Redeemer of men, or the king of the Jews, we also cordially concede:—for, without the adoption of such sentiments, or the expression of such resolutions, they would not have been baptized by the ministers of the Christian religion. This, however, cannot be regarded as a profession of faith, or a public confession of Christ, as understood by our opponents,—provided their practice be a true exponent of their sentiments; and would by no means satisfy the most lax or the least rigid among them.

But, assuming, that a belief in the Messiahship of the Saviour was an essential prerequisite to baptism; it could only apply to adults who were capable of exercising this faith; and must leave the question of infants totally unaffected. The Jewish proselyte must have believed in the Hebrew religion, and have made a profession of his faith, and have avowed his resolution to keep the law; but his children were not obliged or required to do the same, previous to their circumcision and baptism, in conjunction with their parents. And if New Testament baptisms were like those of the Old—which our objectors admit,—why must none be baptized now, who are not capable of professing faith and confessing Christ? To reply, that Christianity is a more spiritual and personal affair than the former dispensation, (which, however, is but very partially true) does not meet the case; since the like leading principles might have been observed under both economies—as doubtless they were.

But it is a groundless assumption, that a profession of faith, or a public confession of Christ, in the modern sense of the terms, was ever required or given prior to any New Testament

Baptisms ; unless the simple act of being baptized be construed into such an act ; and then it would include infants equally with men and women. All that John's converts did was to 'confess their sins.' The Samaritans 'believed Philip 'preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the 'name of Jesus.' The three thousand asked the apostles, 'what shall we do?' And, when informed, 'they gladly 'received the word,' which Peter proclaimed in their hearing, (though the term '*gladly*' here is said to be of doubtful authority.) Cornelius made no confession of faith ; nor did the Jailor ; nor did Saul of Tarsus ; nor did Lydia, who simply attended to the things which were spoken of Paul ; nor did the Eunuch—according to the generally admitted correct version of the narrative of his baptism ; nor did Stephanus, nor Crispus, nor Gaius—nor any one else, who received the ordinance at the hands of the first ministers of the gospel. Men were baptized 'unto Christ'—or consecrated to him. They were baptized 'unto his death'—or unto the doctrine of his glorious atonement. They 'put on Christ,' assumed his name, and professed his gospel ; but not before they were baptized. Having first symbolically put away the filth of the flesh by baptism, they gave, or were to give, the 'answer' or 'petition' of a good conscience. They were baptized 'unto repentance ;' unto the 'remission of sins,' that they might 'receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' They were to 'repent,' (alter their minds) 'and be baptized ;' to 'believe and be baptized.' But in no case were they required to make any thing like a modern confession of faith ; nor was it, that we read of, done in a single instance.

Consequently, this, like all the preceding objections, is destitute of the slightest weight against Infant Baptism. Jenkins says, 'On the day of Pentecost, the converted Jews 'and Proselytes were baptized upon a solemn profession of 'faith and repentance, previously obtained.' p. 8. Where the writer finds this solemn profession, it is difficult to discover ; it certainly is not expressed ; whether implied or not, the reader may judge. They [*gladly*] received, or believed the word preached ; but, for aught that appears, they did not utter a syllable themselves, in the shape of a profession of their faith or religious creed. One thing is indisputable, that no confession of faith was required or given in that great model baptism in the Red Sea, to which Paul alludes in the words of our text. But, even had a profession and confession been systematically required of all the baptized, prior to their



undergoing this ceremony; that rendered by parents would have scripturally and perfectly answered for their children, and been regarded the same, in effect, as if intelligently uttered by themselves. In all large deputations to princes or persons in power, one speaks for all; and in our appeals to God, in the assembly of worshippers, one confesses for all. Our previous expositions of analogous cases, have placed this doctrine of parental authority and substitution, in such matters, beyond all reasonable disputation. There is one consolation, that infants make no insincere or hypocritical profession of faith and confession of Christ in baptism, which, unhappily, many adults do, to the deception of their ministers, and to their own greater condemnation.

Mr. Jenkins couples repentance with faith as necessary in candidates for baptism. That heartfelt sorrow for sin did immediately precede baptism, in the case of many adults who underwent this rite, is hardly to be questioned. But that it was not a universal or general affection, we devoutly believe—the case of our blessed Saviour we know to have been an exception. He was without sin; and not being a transgressor could have felt no remorse. There are apparently numerous other instances confirming our judgment. Mr. Fleming says, ‘I cannot but at present be of opinion, that the term [*metanoia*] *repentance*, when applied to baptism, had this idea applied to it, viz.: men’s *change of mind*, or their *renouncing* the religion they had before professed, either of Gentilism, or Judaism. For although *baptism* demanded a *change* of vicious habits in all such who embraced the gospel, to any good purpose; yet, I doubt not, but there were *many* baptized with this baptism, who were *habitually pious and holy persons*—among such I reckon the *guileless Nathaniel* to have been one, and the *devout Cornelius* to have been another. And I see no reason to exclude either *Lydia*, or the *Eunuch*, or *Crispus*.—To suppose baptism to have been the baptism of repentance to such pious persons, must chiefly intend, their *renouncing Judaism*, or import the change of their religion.’ *Def.* p. 38. Dr. Macknight, on 2 Cor. vii. 9.: ‘The word *metanoia* properly denotes such a change of one’s *opinion* concerning some action which he hath done, as produceth a change in his conduct, to the better. . . . *metamelia* signifies the *grief* which one feels for what he hath done, though it be followed with no alteration of conduct.’ The former word (and not the latter) is invariably used in connexion with baptism. Change your opinion, and be baptized. Besides, here

repentance is as necessary to the receiving of the Holy Ghost and the remission of sins, as to being baptized; and, according to the logic and theology of Jenkins, children, not having the power of repenting, cannot enjoy the grace of the Spirit, or the redemption of Christ.

According to Mr. Noel's own admission, a profession or confession of the faith may be made, and is made, elsewhere, besides at the baptism. 'A person sprinkled in infancy may, indeed, have professed his faith in Christ, by coming to the Lord's table, and in other ways; but he has never made a baptismal profession of faith according to Christ's commands, both implied and expressed. Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 5; Acts ii. 38. His confession of Christ in one appointed way seems to be no valid reason for neglecting to confess him in another concurrent way, which is no less unequivocally prescribed.' *Sub.* p. 291. In this citation, the writer has referred us to no less than four texts of Scripture, to prove his doctrine of baptismal confessions; and, strange to say, not one of them affords us the slightest intimation of any such public act, as he is advocating, and which his denomination always demands. Let the reader turn to the passages in question, and, I doubt not, he will arrive at the like conclusion—that no profession and confession of faith were required and made, 'implied or expressed.' What he means by an implied confession, he does not tell us. It certainly is not such as his church requires! We trust, however, that many have attained salvation who never made it at the font—especially the little ones who have died in the Lord! In the last citation he modifies his previous assumption; and elsewhere he says, 'As baptism is an appointed method of confession, it is generally, to those who know Christ's appointment, as necessary as confession is.' *Ib.* p. 40. But we know it is not generally necessary, and not at all required in God's book, previous to baptism.

Such a confession as our opponents require of candidates for baptism includes an exposition of their doctrinal sentiments, an account of their religious experience, and a declaration of their intention to walk, as becometh the gospel, for the future. Now, supposing such a confession to have been required by John the Baptist and our Lord's apostles—and our opponents, of course, conclude that it was—does it not strike the reader as rather strange, that not a single person, of all the multitudes who thus confessed and were baptized, and then apostatized and became enemies to Christ and his gospel, is ever reproved

for making a false or hypocritical profession, and of thereby obtaining this rite under false pretences? To have made serious and solemn asseverations of what they believed, and felt, and designed to do, and then, by tens of thousands, to have belied their public avowals; to have gone back and walked no more with Christ, was to have committed an offence that called for severe and open reproof. Such would be administered to similar backsliders by our brethren. And yet, even Simon Magus himself is not charged with any such duplicity. He, and countless numbers besides, had been consecrated to Christianity, had been recognized as nominal disciples, or placed in a position to learn more fully the laws and duties of our holy religion. But, that they had made such a confession of faith, as our brethren assume, is never even intimated in the whole Christian narrative. Nor are any individuals condemned for deceiving the baptizers, by their hypocritical expositions of belief, experience, or holy resolutions, at the baptistry. On what principle can this want of reproof be accounted for, except that no such explicit confessions and avowals were ever made or required? In referring to the confessions made at the Jordan, Mr. Owen remarks, 'The text does not tell us what manner of confession this was, whether in words or works, their submission to baptism was an actual confession of their uncleanness, and that they stood in need of washing. It cannot be thought that it was a confession in words; because one man could not receive a particular confession from the whole country, if they made a confession in words. It is like one made in the names of others, even as the priests did in the names of all the people.' Lev. xvi. 21. Thus 'parents might confess their sins for themselves and their children, &c.' See *Keach*, p. 187. It appears that John baptized *Roman Soldiers* as well as Jews. The great probability is, that they had not before become proselytes to Hebrewism. What kind of previous confession were these men likely to make? Or, did John wait till they had been fully instructed in the laws of God, and given satisfactory testimonies of adequate proficiency in theological wisdom? Can our friends throw any light on this question?

Among Mr. Noel's innumerable 'Ifs,' and 'Whys,' he asks, 'Why did Christ say, that they were to baptize believers, if faith was not necessary to baptism?' p. 42. But, whoever denied that faith was not necessary to baptism in those that were capable of believing? But is faith required where it is

impossible? Faith was required of the adult heathen proselyte before he was circumcised and baptized, but not of his little children, who were circumcised and baptized with him. But what kind of faith was required? Of course, reply our opponents, 'Saving faith, for this is in the commission, as 'given by Mark.—"He that believeth and is baptized shall 'be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.'" chap. xvi. 16. This faith, however, is not said to be necessary to baptism; but faith and baptism are said to be necessary to salvation. Baptism happens to stand the former of two requisites for the saved. And the intent of the divine speaker would have been the same had the position of the words been reversed. Christ is not saying, If you believe, you may be baptized; but if you do both, you may be redeemed. Being born of water, previous to believing, might equally have been the order, supposed to be meant, as in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus. The truth is, as repeatedly asserted, that saving faith is never rendered an essential preparative to water-baptism. And if, in the last cited text, the baptism of the Holy Ghost be intended—as it probably is—it must precede saving faith—unless saving faith may be possessed and exercised without regeneration. 'With the heart man 'believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession 'is made unto salvation.' Rom. x. 10. Why are belief and confession made requisite to salvation, if men could be saved without them? But are they required of infants?

Mr. Noel says, 'Infants can be saved without faith, because 'God can give them regeneration which is equivalent; but 'they are unfit for baptism, which is a profession of faith.' p. 172. The former doctrine we admit; the latter we deny. But why should not Paul's language exclude children from heaven, as entirely as Christ's excludes them from baptism? In Acts ii. 38, Repentance is rendered a prerequisite to baptism. But, as before observed, it is declared to be equally essential to salvation. Luke xiii. 3. Hence, the young are as effectually excluded from eternal life as from the font, by these assertions. Dr. Carson, in order to meet this difficulty, asserts, that the gospel has nothing to do with infants, 'nor 'have gospel ordinances any respect to them.' p. 173. Can he mean, that the gospel has nothing to do with the *treatment* of them—their dedication to God, and training them up in the ways of evangelical holiness? Why, it has to do even with oxen, commanding us not to muzzle such as tread out the corn. He says, the passage in Mark xvi. 16, has no reference at all



to children. *Id.* Then it cannot exclude them from baptism; their title to which we readily discover in other parts of the inspired writings. Let our opponents, therefore, cease to cite this text to prove that infants should not be baptized—since it affords no evidence for or against this rite, any more than if it were not found in the Scriptures. Dr. Jenkins, on Mark xvi. 16, says, ‘As to the salvation of infants, the hope of that must arise from other texts of Scripture, not from this, which is confined *absolutely* to them that can be the subjects of a ‘preached gospel.’ *Def.* p. 42. Then, as just said, it has nothing to say against their baptism; and our opponents have no right to quote it as, by inference, excluding them from the font, any more than from glory. And yet, there is not a passage in the New Testament more frequently and exultingly cited against Infant Baptism than this—a passage which, it is conceded, is absolutely confined to adults!

Mr. Gibbs asserts, that Baptism ‘is a solemn act of divine worship.’ p. 340. He then quotes half-a-dozen passages of Scripture to sustain his assumption—not one of which even remotely indicates, that this rite is ever designated divine worship, or that the person dipped or dipping, sprinkling or sprinkled, is said, by these acts, to be worshipping God. Every act of obedience is not one of worship, or, circumcising a child, offering a sacrifice, or washing brazen vessels and beds, would be acts of divine worship—which consist in adoring, praising, and calling upon God, through Jesus Christ. He proceeds, ‘To be baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost is to profess that we are the subjects of his regenerating power.’ p. 342. Where, in the whole compass of the sacred volume, does he find a person, when, being baptized, making such a profession? A little before, he says, ‘Positive institutions are signs, deriving their use from the end they prefigure.’ p. 337. But here, it seems, the rite is an avowed seal of a previous engagement; and an open avowal, that the work of divine grace has been effected in the soul. Of such a profession, by the baptized, we ask for an instance; but we might long ask in vain. Once more, ‘Baptism prefigures the death of the believer’s body and his resurrection to eternal life.’ p. 356. And the only text he quotes to prove his point is, ‘For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.’ 2 Cor. v. 4. It would puzzle even Keach himself to make out many points of analogy between dipping a man under water, and his being

clothed upon with a new garment; or by being presented with a new tent to live in, that his poor frail body might become immortal! But, at the best, the poor similitude is not Paul's, but Mr. Gibbs'. Dr. Byron says, 'If it be admitted that baptism is a gospel ordinance, it follows as a consequent that its observance can only be enjoined upon the recipients of a spiritual birth.' p. 12. But, to read the Bible, teach the young, attend public worship, are certainly gospel ordinances, or such as the gospel enjoins. According to this writer, 'it follows as a consequent, that the observance of them can only be enjoined upon the recipients of a spiritual birth!' The fact, however, is, that they are enjoined upon all men; as the Dr., unless a rank Antinomian, will readily admit.

From the frequent reference of Baptist writers to verbal confessions and professions of faith, made before ministers and church members, previous to immersion, and the great stress laid on this preparatory act; one might be inclined to conclude, that such a practice was common, if not universal, in the New Testament Churches. But what is the real fact of the case? That the people, or some of them, baptized by John, confessed their sins to him or to God, personally or collectively, in word or deed, before or after their baptism, we are plainly told. But this confession stands alone. No similar instance is met with in the gospel narratives. We read of confessing Christ before men; that Jesus was the Christ; and that he was actually come into the world. Paul confessed that he worshipped the God of his fathers. He enjoins the Romans to confess Jesus Christ with the mouth, to believe on him with the heart, and to confess him before the Gentiles. Men were to confess their faults one to another. John confessed that he was not the Christ. Jesus witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. And Timothy professed a good profession before many witnesses. These references comprehend nearly all that is said in the New Testament about religious confessions and professions. Not a passage is to be found in it sustaining the notion of confessing to Christian pastors prior to baptism, any more than of confessing to popish priests before absolution—unless those above referred to be exceptions. The Eunuch's profession of belief, in the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the promised Messiah, previous to his baptism, even were it a genuine part of Scripture, contains nothing like that required by our opponents before they dip their converts. Hence, it is plain our good brethren build their system of confessing and professing, before immersion,

on a basis as insecure as the shifting sands on the sea shore. To reply, that times and circumstances are altered, and that confessions are needed now, though they might not have been required in the apostolic age, is just surrendering the argument sought to be sustained—which is, not what is needful now, but what was practised or required formerly.—Mr. Keach truly says, ‘That vow or promise in baptism that you dream ‘of, prepares no man for Christ, nor fits any for’ (baptism into) ‘his church; no, no, it must be conversion, faith, and ‘regeneration itself.’ p. 180.

A Baptist writer correctly remarks, ‘As we have often ‘witnessed, when a truly pious character, who, for a series of ‘years, has made an honorable profession of religion, and even ‘been eminently useful as a preacher of the gospel, adopts ‘these views of the ordinance, and acts accordingly, the ‘general impression is, not that he is become a Christian, but, ‘that he is turned Baptist. His personal Christianity was ‘previously too well established to need such evidence to ‘support it. Baptism, in such cases, appears to answer no ‘end whatever, except it be, to tell all whom it may concern, ‘that he who was formerly a Churchman, an Independent, a ‘Methodist, or a Quaker, is now a Baptist. Thus, that ordi- ‘nance, which was originally the distinguishing badge of ‘Christianity, is become the mere badge of a sect, adapted to ‘excite a sectarian spirit, and promote sectarian views. Now, ‘we cannot persuade ourselves that baptism was ordained for ‘any such purpose as this; least of all, that it was designed ‘to furnish one particular sect with the arrogant claim of an ‘exclusive right to sit down at the table of the Lord; while ‘they refuse to acknowledge, as churches of Christ, any ‘Christian societies that are not formed precisely on the same ‘model with their own. That this is the principle on which ‘the Baptists proceed, their conduct sufficiently evinces. They ‘hold no communion with any churches but those of the *same faith and order* with themselves. They give no dismissions ‘to them, and receive no admissions from them. Nor is the ‘operation of this act of exclusion from Christian fellowship ‘confined to Pedobaptists. It extends to churches of their ‘own denomination who allow of free communion. In their ‘esteem, the admission, into such a connexion, of a single ‘individual, who has not been baptized as they have been ‘baptized, is sufficient to contaminate the whole body; and ‘render the society, of which he forms a part, unworthy to be ‘designated a church of Christ, or to be treated as such.’ *Agnostos*, p. 96-98.

OBJECTION XV. *There are such differences between the baptism unto Moses, and unto Christ, that the latter cannot be based on the former, nor derive any direct countenance from it.*—The accordance between these administrations, we shall unfold in a subsequent section. The discrepancies we will now state concisely, and shew that they are of no moment, compared with their striking and important coincidences. It may be said, (1) That God baptized the adult Hebrews without regeneration of heart, holiness of life, and probably without their immediate recognition of the act. (2) That he baptized the children without the solicitation or manifest concurrence of their parents. (3.) That, as far as we are informed, all this was done without the intervention or instrumentality of Moses, of Aaron, or of any other ministers. And, (4) That the whole transaction was singular and, consequently, not to be regarded as a precursor of or precedent for baptism under the gospel economy. These statements contain all the exceptions any candid opponent is likely to take on this head, against our foregoing and future conclusions, in reference to Infant Baptism, under the gospel economy. Should we meet with any others, they will be answered in the further consideration of this question.

In reply, permit me to observe, that Paul's exposition of the baptism of the Hebrews, and his application of the transaction to the congregation at Corinth, meet all the above objections, and, indeed, every other that can be made against our interpretation of the passage especially under consideration. He refers to it as being of sufficient force and agreement with the baptism of the Corinthians, to found his appeal to their consciences upon it. That there were differences between the baptisms unto Moses and unto Christ, we do not and need not deny. So there were differences between the original performance of every other rite and the after administration of it. Look at circumcision, as first performed by Abraham, and afterwards by the Hebrew ministers of this ceremony. He circumcised hundreds of adults as well as children; they, probably, did not circumcise a single adult for many years together, nor probably a genuine adult Hebrew for a thousand years after the conquest of Canaan. Look at the first celebration of the passover in Egypt, and the ordinary celebration of it afterwards, as seen in the case of our Lord and his disciples. Look at the first observance of the Eucharist, over which Christ himself personally presided—as he evidently did over the first baptism in the sea—and the like sacrament now



superintended by ordinary ministers of the gospel. The differences in these cases are quite as great as between the baptism in the sea, by John at the Jordan, and by Peter on the day of Pentecost. In the first institution of this rite, Jehovah himself baptized the Hebrews because it was beyond the power of any human being—not supernaturally qualified—to baptize, probably, three millions of people in their transit through the sea, in the space of a few hours; especially if every individual personally received the consecrating element. When, subsequently, his ministers were competent to the work of baptizing, they always or frequently did it. God first planted Eden; but when Adam and Eve were created and qualified for the task, they were commanded to till the ground and manage their own beautiful paradise. Further, it will be seen, from citations already given, and from others yet to follow, that our leading opponents concede the analogy in question, and admit that the baptism in the sea was a prelude to Christian baptism; and that the latter derives much light and emphasis from the former.

Because God baptized the Israelites without asking their consent, and possibly without their recognition of the spiritual meaning of the transaction; it does not follow, that his ministers, by obtaining the concurrence of adult persons to be baptized, must violate the essential accordance of these transactions. When God commanded the father of the faithful to circumcise himself and his male household, he did not ask their acquiescence; and with the religious meaning of the operation, it is very probable few of them were perfectly, or even at all, acquainted. But no priests could afterwards perform the same rite, on any adult proselyte and his children, without his consent. When Christ washed the disciples' feet, they understood not the design of this gracious and condescending act, until he afterwards explained it to them. It is one of Jehovah's plans to act first, and unfold his intentions subsequently. 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' Thus, his dealings with the Hebrew nation were, at the time, profoundly mysterious to them, and were made manifest afterwards. 'The day shall declare it.' As the Hebrew people, generally, might not have understood clearly, nor at all, God's design in their baptism, it certainly does not follow, that infants should not be baptized in after time, because they might not understand the nature of the ceremony. The reverse is the only fair inference from the circumstances.

In the baptism with the Holy Ghost, of which baptism with water is confessedly a symbol, God does it without soliciting the approval or permission of his creatures—till then, blind, carnal, and dead in trespasses and sins. It is an unsought, free, sovereign, and often, at first, an unrecognized act of mercy. And were he himself now to baptize with water, as he did at the institution of this sacrament, he would, doubtless, exercise his supreme prerogative, commanding them to submit, and not first solicit their mental concurrence. As he binds his creatures in high covenant obligations, without their ‘Amen,’ as much as with it; so he might baptize and bring them into the baptismal covenant, as he did the Hebrews, without consulting their judgment or will. But, when his ministers labour to lead men to faith and obedience, by an official instrumentality, the concurrence of the parties, personally or relatively, is always essential.

The above remarks, I think, render it plain, that the differences between the ancient baptism unto Moses, by God himself, and the after baptisms unto Christ, by his disciples, are insufficient to destroy, or even to weaken, our argument, based on the facts of their essential agreement. It is true, Mr. Keach, in a citation previously made, argues against our referring to, or arguing from, the baptism in the sea, because unconverted, or, as he calls them, ‘wicked men,’ were the subjects of that great national purification. He assumes, as if an indisputable point, that none but truly regenerated persons should be baptized under the gospel; and, thence, infers, that the two ordinances are essentially different. But this is completely begging the question, and, like a bold partizan, taking the chief matter of debate as settled, and his own positions as granted. Such conclusions, as a matter of course, go for just nothing at all, in the estimate of a Pedobaptist, nor, indeed, of any one else, viewing the argument before us in its true character and bearings.

Without adducing any further facts, reasonings, or reflections, in confirmation of our first proposition; I shall deem it incontrovertibly proved, that the words, ‘Our Fathers,’ as understood and applied by Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, comprehend all the men, women, and children, who came out of Egypt, under the guidance of Moses, and passed through the Red Sea; and that all these, too, were really, intentionally, and scripturally, baptized—the women and children—equally with the holiest, oldest, and greatest, males in the tribes of Israel. Every objection brought against this

interpretation of the terms employed by the apostle, or which are likely to be raised against it, I have plainly stated, and, I believe, conclusively answered—perhaps, at a length, and, with expositions, beyond their controversial value. It will be seen that some of the objections stated and refuted are relevant to this controversy irrespective of the particular basis on which we are resting the main weight of the present argument. But their consideration seemed essential to the full discussion of our subject. Other objections will be noticed and considered in the further prosecution of the inquiry. We shall now proceed to our next general proposition.

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## PART SECOND.

THE BAPTISM OF THE ISRAELITES UNTO MOSES EMBRACES ALL THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES AND PROPERTIES OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

My object now is to show the reader, that the analogies between these baptisms are sufficiently ample, clear, and cogent, to warrant the conclusion, 'That, as infants were baptized in 'the former case, so they undoubtedly were in the days of the 'apostle Paul, and should be so to the end of time.' The leading discrepancies between the baptism unto Moses and the baptism unto Christ, have been noticed already, and, I presume, the objections based upon them sufficiently answered. I may, however, further observe, that, in some particulars, the baptism of John differed from that of the apostles; yet that, in all their principal features, the parallel between them is manifest, striking, and instructive. Mr. Hall says, 'The 'principal difference betwixt John's baptism, and that which 'the apostles were commissioned to perform after our Saviour's 'ascension, consisted in the former not being celebrated in 'the name of Jesus.' p. 120. John's was as truly a spiritual, if not as evangelical, a baptism as Peter's on the day of Pentecost. There were shades of difference between the baptism to Moses, and that by John; but still that to Moses, as Paul assures us, was a real, true, and spiritual baptism. To show that I am not singular in this judgment of the latter case, I will cite the sentiments of several writers of considerable

authority in Biblical questions, and in the Baptismal controversy. Others might be given, were the subjoined not abundant for our purpose.

Dr. Urwick :—‘The apostle represents the whole nation of Israel as having been made disciples to Moses—or separated to receive the instruction he was to communicate in the divine will—by being baptized. It also implies that what the baptism spoken of did for the Israelites with regard to Moses, the baptism as now ordained does for us with regard to Christ. The baptism of the Israelites did not signify that they had *already learnt* what Moses was to teach them, for Moses had not yet received the code in which he was to instruct them ; but it signified their being placed under his care to be taught the revelation he was to promulgate.’

Mr. Noel :—‘The argument of the apostle is as follows : As the Israelites had been baptized unto Moses ; so the Corinthians had been baptized unto Christ ; and as many of the baptized Israelites perished in the wilderness through their rebellion ; so might the baptized Christians fall too : hence, he urged them to beware. In this passage, therefore, there is a comparison between the baptism of the Israelites and the baptism of professed believers’—and their families. *Mode*, p. 39.

The Rev. Dr. Bloomfield observes, ‘Baptism, it must be remembered, was a symbolical rite, by which any one binds himself to faith and obedience to any teacher of religion, and the baptism itself was a form of initiation and inauguration into that religion. Thus the sense is ; they were, by passing under the cloud, and through the sea, as it were, baptized, or *initiated into* the religion promulgated by Moses ; and thus thoroughly recognized his divine mission, and bound themselves in future to obey his injunctions.’ *Digest in loc.*

Dr. Halley :—‘The argument of St. Paul evidently implies that the baptism into Moses was an important religious rite . . . . He declares that the whole nation of Israel was, previously to the giving of the law, baptized into Moses, which is exactly the doctrine on which the Jews found their baptism of proselytes. The apostle indeed seems to represent the baptism as referring to the cloud and the sea : the Rabbins, for the most part, to the ablution, the sanctifying themselves and washing their clothes at the foot of Sinai. But, both agree that the whole nation of Israel was, previously to the covenant of Sinai, baptized unto Moses, initiated by water into the religion or covenant which he announced.



‘According to the Talmuds and according to St. Paul, there was a baptism of all the tribes of Israel unto Moses.’ vol. 1. p. 117, 118.

Rev. C. Fleming:—‘Paul could not have fixed on an instance that could possibly be more favourable to Infant Baptism; forasmuch as the Jewish parents, with all their households, infants included, male and female, were certainly baptized together. And, in like manner, as the Jewish parents, by their baptism, owned Moses as their leader, and his institutions to be divine, so do Christian parents, when they first embrace the Christian doctrine, and are baptized with their households, own Christ to be their leader, and his institutions to be divine. It follows, by undoubted consequence, from Paul’s fixing on this baptism of the Israelites, as a prelude to Christian baptism,’ [Killingworth,] ‘that infants must be concerned in the Christian baptism.... If this consequence be not fairly drawn, I despair of ever being able to draw one, or of seeing a consequence stand related to the premise.’ p. 17.

An Anonymous writer, in a work entitled “Infant as well as Believers’ Baptism proved from Scripture Authority and Example,” says, ‘From 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, we have an example of hundreds’ [of thousands] ‘of infants that were baptized with their parents, with a baptism which signified the same thing for substance, as our Christian baptism does now.... Here, then, we have a baptism which at once proves the subjects and mode, viz.: parents and hundreds’ [of thousands] ‘of dear children that were all baptized by *pouring*, yea, with a baptism which signified the same thing for substance as our Christian does now.’ p. 27.

Rev. S. Green:—‘To be “baptized into Christ,” is a phrase employed, Gal. iii. 27, for putting on a profession of Christianity. To be baptized into Moses, precisely the same form of speech, conveys a similar idea. The scope of the passage is to guard the Corinthians against carelessness and sin. They might trust to their privileges:—“we are the baptized disciples of Christ—we partake of the elements of bread and wine in token of our relation to him.” Think not on that account, the apostle says, to escape with impunity. The fathers were in a similar condition; they were baptized into Moses; they ate and drank of spiritual food and drink; their manna, and their water from the rock, typified some such thing as that which is set forth in the bread and wine of which you partake.... The argument turns simply on the

‘Israelites having made a profession not much unlike that which, by being baptized into Christ, the Corinthians had made.’ *Address*, p. 11.

Rev. J. Bowden :—‘The Israelites were now in a situation, perhaps not unlike that of Christian converts with their households. They had embraced the promise, which is the ground of consolation, likewise to believing gentiles. They had left an idolatrous and defiling country. They were about to enter into solemn covenant with God—into an earlier dispensation of the same covenant that is sealed in Christian baptism. They were confessing themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And the providence of God wonderfully provided for ratifying his promise and their engagement by a seal solemnly and universally applied —“they were all baptized unto” or into “Moses”—by baptism they were introduced into that dispensation of the covenant of which Moses was the mediator.’ p. 171.

Professor Wilson :—‘Baptism into Moses clearly implied the acknowledgement of his official claims as a leader and lawgiver, and of the economy called after his name—just as baptism into Christ implies the acknowledgement of our blessed Lord in his personal and mediatorial character, and of the faith which he founded—and, as the baptism of the commission implies the acknowledgement of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ He adds, ‘There was no immersion, properly so called, in any baptizing element whatever, yet there was a real baptism; for the Spirit of God expressly and solemnly testifies, that all our Fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the sea.’

Rev. T. Dorrington :—‘When the whole nation of Israel are said by the apostle to have been *Baptized unto* Moses, in their passage through the Red Sea, (1 Cor. x. 2,) the meaning of it is, that they did therein come under an engagement, and were bound to receive and obey the rule of religion which Moses should deliver them from God. This is said of the whole nation: and then, as the infants which they carried with them out of Egypt are included in the number spoken of, they passed through the Red Sea, as well as the grown persons, they also came under that engagement taken upon them all in and by a baptism, both old and young. The infants of Israel did, in this passage, according to the apostle’s words, enter into the school of Moses, and became disciples to him, as they came under an obligation and engagement with the rest, to learn and obey the religion

‘taught from God by Moses; therefore, infants may be disciplined, and, by baptism, they may, in and by that sacrament, become engaged to learn and obey the laws of God, though, while infants, they cannot understand them.’ p. 137, 138.

Rev. W. Jones, in his ‘Biblical Cyclopædia,’ writes, ‘It is highly probable that at the initiation of proselytes in the Jewish Church which bore striking resemblance to baptism, and which might induce our Saviour to adopt it.... Nor is it difficult to trace the source of their ideas about baptism; for not only was Moses commanded to wash Aaron and his sons at their consecration, but no person who had contracted ceremonial impurity was admitted into the sanctuary, till it was removed by washing. This law must have extended to the Gentiles who became proselytes of righteousness, and who must have been introduced into the Jewish church by washing as well as circumcision. The conduct of Christ in the institution of the Supper, also, corresponds with his conduct on this occasion; for as the Jews concluded their passover, by giving to every person a piece of bread, and a cup of wine, so Christ, though he set aside, as the nature of his office required, the rites, enjoined by Moses in that ordinance which he had been commemorating, yet he retained the bread and cup added by the Jews.’ *In loc.*—In the book of Common Prayer it is written—‘Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy.... didst safely lead the children of Israel, Thy people, through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy baptism.’ *Adult Baptism.*

Persons opposed to our views and practice on baptism find or fancy a similarity in the *modes* of baptism in the Red Sea, in the Jordan, and in Jerusalem, and plead their assumed accordance in favour of immersion; without betraying the slightest consciousness of inconsistency or impropriety in referring to Old Testament deeds in supporting their views of New Testament transactions. If, therefore, we can discover a sufficient similarity in the *subjects* of these baptisms, to infer the one from the other; they, at least, will not contend that we are arguing from vague, antiquated, or untenable, premises.—But, before proceeding to point out the special particulars of the analogy between the two baptisms—unto Moses and unto Christ—I shall further cite the more extended and explanatory remarks of Mr. Stovel on this head, as found in his Lectures on ‘Baptismal Regeneration.’

‘The whole doctrine’ [of Baptism] ‘derives a very powerful and solemn confirmation from.... 1. Cor. x. 1-14.... This

'case occurs in a very powerful exhortation to Christian  
 'obedience and purity of life. To urge this, Paul employs  
 'the example of the ancient Jewish people, at and after the  
 'passage of the Red Sea. Previously to that event, the whole  
 'matter of their deliverance was one purely of recognition.  
 'If any individual of their tribes refused to follow Moses out  
 'of Egypt, no tribunal existed there at which he could be  
 'be judged. When they came to the sea, it was their own  
 'act to enter the divided waters. They were then covered by  
 'the cloud, and thus they became immersed as they entered  
 'into Moses. If they had so resolved, before the passage,  
 'they might have turned back into Egypt; but not so after  
 'they had passed to the other side. From that moment they  
 'were under God in the hands of Moses. By his means they  
 'received their direction, defence, and subsistence. He was  
 'their anointed Ruler, called in one place their Christ. Under  
 'his government they were called upon to glorify the God of  
 'their fathers, either in the blessedness which resulted from  
 'obedience, or in the punishment which was due to their  
 'rebellion. They lusted, and were smitten; they tempted  
 'their Christ, and were destroyed with serpents; they became  
 'adulterers, and twenty thousand perished in one day; they  
 'murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer; they were  
 'treated as men in the hands of God; and that nation  
 'continues to bear the same discipline to this very hour.  
 'Nothing else can explain the present condition of the Jews.  
 'By the discipline of their covenant, they have become a  
 'wonder to all nations on the earth.

'These things, the apostle says, are examples to us; for  
 'having once been baptized, entering into Christ, we are  
 'subjected to his discipline, whatever the event may be.  
 'Whether we go forward to life, or turn back again unto  
 'death; the vow of God is upon us; and, in love or wrath,  
 'His love and honour must be vindicated. This is the whole  
 'point of the apostle's exhortation, and it is full of the deepest  
 'solemnity. It ought never to be read without prayerful examin-  
 'ation. Hence, it has sometimes seemed ready to break my  
 'heart, [!] when controversial critics have been found pecking  
 'at this, with similar passages, as sparrows at work upon a  
 'flower, tearing it to atoms, defacing its beauty, destroying its  
 'form, and reducing it to absolute contemptibility [!] in order,  
 'that being bereft of all its grandeur and worth, it might  
 'seem to yield a vain support for theories which deserve not  
 'the smallest esteem. By this we learn, how ill men are



‘repaid for thus abrogating the solemn purposes of inspiration, and turning away from those streams of thought, that flow from the dwelling place of the Deity, and, swelling into sublimest grandeur, rush to their conclusion, like torrents[!] as if to show, that their merciful Author designed to carry all the soul with Him in his kind intentions’[!] Lect. iii. p. 33-35.

The leading principles enunciated in this long quotation are highly interesting and important, and do credit to the penetration and candour of the writer. They are also, on the whole, as true as they are eloquently expressed. In fact, the latter part reaches the pathetic, the poetic, and the sublime! Still, there are two or three assertions in the passage which, if I understand the author rightly, strike me as untenable. He says, the Hebrews ‘became *immersed* as they entered ‘into Moses;’ surely, it cannot be meant, that they were ‘dipped, or plunged into’ the water, as this word, from *immergo*, evidently means! In the controversy, on the mode of baptism, we are continually reminded, that baptism is not a state, or a condition, but an act; and that *baptizo* means always and only to dip. Hence, in consistency with this idea, pouring tuns of water on a person would not scripturally baptize him. He must be put into and under water, and the element must come in contact with every part of his body; and, then, he must be formally raised up out of it, before he can be perfectly baptized, in accordance with the avowed sentiments, and the universal practice, of adult immersionists. This being essential to ‘Modern Immersion,’ we may safely aver, that the Hebrews were not really immersed in the Red Sea. The truth is, that though our good Baptist friends find and admit various manifest modes of operation expressed by the original verb in question, in different Greek authors, they contrive to make it always to mean dipping or immersing, literally or figuratively, expressed or implied! and never attempt to baptize in any other form than that of plunging the entire body under water—constantly pleading the supposed simple and invariable sense of the Greek verb, as the rule of their ceremony! They never baptize persons by getting them to walk on dry land, with water on each side of them, and a cloud or shower of rain, natural or artificial, over their heads, and then call it an immersion, or Christian baptism!

It may be allowable, in passing, to notice, that our opponents frequently complain, that the original word *baptizo*, in the New Testament, is not invariably translated, to dip, to plunge, or to immerse; thereby expressing in English, what they

strenuously contend is the true and only sense of it in the Greek language. But, had this been done, the words, Baptist, Baptizing, and Baptism, would never, in all probability, have been in ordinary use among us, any more than among the ancient Hebrews, in whose language the word is nowhere found. And had our brethren still immersed, dipped, or plunged their converts, in accordance with this restricted translation; and had this rite, then as now, supplied the distinguishing designation of their denomination; instead of having Baptist Ministers, Baptist Brethren, and Baptist Chapels; we should have had Dipping Ministers, Dipping Brethren, and Dipping Chapels! And if the grounds of their complaint against the translators of the Bible be deemed valid by them, and if to dip be the proper sense of the verb, they could not, on their present principles, have objected to such an appellation. Those who regard the original, in the New Testament, as conveying the broad and general idea of an initiating, consecrating, or purifying rite, rather than of a specific, restricted, and unvarying mode of administering it; whether they poured, sprinkled, or immersed, would not be consistently subject to any such special, and, to our ears, uncouth designation. Indeed, the name which our brethren now bear, whether given to them originally, or assumed by themselves subsequently, indicates that they only, of all the Christian denominations in the world, really baptized their converts! Against this we demur. We believe that we, at least, truly and scripturally, baptize both adults and infants. The Papists are blamed for appropriating to themselves the term *Catholic*, as if they comprehended the universal church of God: yet, our opponents claim to be the exclusive or only true baptizers in Christendom! But to return to Mr. Stovel.

He asserts, that the 'Jewish nation continues to bear the 'same discipline to this hour. . . . that nothing else can explain 'the present condition of the Jews; and that by the 'discipline of their' [baptismal] 'covenant, they have become 'a wonder to all nations of the earth.' But is he to be understood, as meaning, that the one act of baptism, in the Red Sea, involved all their posterity, as to its privileges and obligations, to the latest times? If so, he gives a vast deal more importance to that transaction than we ever thought of attaching to it, or than the apostle gives to it, in his allusion to the ceremony, or than the baptisms of the New Testament ever assumed. It would be like the fabulous consecration of St. Peter to the Poppedom of Rome; in which the celestial

virtues of the Spirit, first poured on his head, have come in an uninterrupted and unimpaired stream of light, authority, and holiness, to every bishop, priest, and deacon, papist or protestant, apostolically ordained, in the congregations of the Lord, without any fresh supply from the sources above! According to our view of the text and rite, there must have been a reiteration of the act in all succeeding generations among the Jews—at least, so long as baptism was a recognized personal sign of the Mosaic Covenant. That it was not the baptism of a nation once for all, and to last for ever in its results, without a repetition, is certain; for we know that John and the disciples of Christ baptized the Jews in their own day, before the special kingdom of Christ was set up, and consecrated them to the same God who led the tribes out of Egypt, and gave them his laws at Sinai. This baptism in the sea was not literally to Moses, whose personal influence was to terminate with his life on Mount Nebo; but to that great and glorious religious system of which he was the medium and mediator, and which continued to the death of Christ; and, in its more expansive application, continues to the present day. Into this system, people must be personally inducted and instructed, generation after generation, in order that the baptismal covenant may affect and benefit them as they come into existence.

The covenant of circumcision was of a like order. The one act of circumcising Abraham and his household did not suffice for all their succeeding posterity; it was to be repeated, from father to son, down to the death of Christ; when, having answered the leading purpose of its original institution, it was to be virtually, if not absolutely and universally, done away—leaving water baptism as the sole external symbol of regeneration, and the only initiatory rite of the gospel economy. It will be seen, that every new subject dedicated to God, under the law, was called to undergo a fresh ceremony of consecration. Aaron was not anointed for all succeeding High Priests, nor Saul for all the Kings of Israel who came after him. The dedication of the first sanctuary did not supersede the necessity of dedicating the second; and the holy vessels, as they were brought into use, were, in their turn, purified for the service of God. So were the seed of Abraham, as they came into the world. We have here a valid corroboration of the doctrine, that baptism was continued among the Jews from Moses to Christ—at least, I can conclude nothing less, if Mr. Stovel be correct, in saying the

covenant of baptism was perpetual among that people. There were avowedly leading features of agreement between the covenants of circumcision and baptism; and of these their personal application and perpetuity among the Jews, would not be the least prominent.

It is reasonable to suppose, that the signs of both covenants would be alike reiterated as long as the covenants themselves remained in their original force; which was certainly the case till the full introduction of the New Testament economy. That the sign of the Abrahamic covenant was then virtually abrogated, is not a question now with any enlightened professor of Christianity; and that the special sign of the Mosaic or the baptismal covenant was to be perpetuated, till the end of the gospel dispensation, is a matter equally indisputable by all Baptist and Pedobaptist followers of Christ. Other signs and seals of God's gracious covenant, given to Moses, or renewed through him, were continued from year to year, till the whole Mosaic system was abolished in Judea, if not much longer. The sacrifices bled daily on the altar, and at other appointed intervals. The feasts of commemoration were, or should have been, regularly kept. The tabernacle and temple services were unremittingly performed. The sabbath day was, no doubt, weekly observed by all the pious Hebrews. Tithes, offerings, and oblations were duly brought to sustain the institutions of Israel. And though we have very few historical notices of the continuous performance of these duties, none question the fact, or the obligation to do so.

Consequently, there is as much reason for believing that this initiatory rite, first publicly administered in the Red Sea, was perpetuated, like many others which were commenced or renewed about the same time. It does not appear why the Hebrews, who left Egypt, should be personally baptized unto Moses, or rather consecrated to his religion, and not every succeeding generation of that people. We must suppose either that all personal religious privileges and obligations, connected with the ancient baptismal covenant, were the result of being born of a consecrated ancestry; or, that the descendants of those baptized in the sea were not as greatly blessed as their forefathers; or that they, with all proselytes to Judaism, were individually the subjects of the like initiatory rite. The choice among these three alternatives must be made, and the last is the one which evidently claims the preference. Further, that there were certain rites, duly, and perhaps daily, administered among the Hebrews, which Paul



elsewhere designates *Baptisms*, and which, in all their leading purposes, were the same as the New Testament baptisms, our opponents, as will be seen in the sequel, candidly admit; and which few persons of judgment and candour will seriously dispute.

In truth, if the Hebrew baptismal covenant, imposed in the Red Sea, involved that people in 'the same discipline to this 'very hour,' the symbol must have been continuously administered to the succeeding generations of their tribes, during their continuance as a nation, and must have been fully incorporated in the institutions of the gospel on the resurrection of the Messiah. Mr. Stovel evidently and very properly understands the apostle to be addressing the Corinthians as baptized persons, as being well acquainted with the rite of baptism, and with their baptismal obligations. Without this, there would have been no coherence in Paul's discourse, nor analogy in his illustrations. To have told them, that the baptized Israelites broke their baptismal covenant, and were punished for it, would have had no adaptation to the Corinthians, nor any motive to steadfastness, had they not been also religiously baptized. They might have readily inferred—'It is true, the 'Hebrews were baptized and were severely chastised for 'violating their baptismal covenant; but as we have not been 'baptized at all, or not like that ancient people, we have no such 'covenant to break, nor any such obligations to violate; therefore, 'the reasoning is without relevancy to us; though it would be 'to any other people actually initiated to religion, after the manner 'of Our Fathers, in the cloud and in the sea. Where there is no 'law, there can be no transgression of it. We are without the 'first, and, consequently, are exempt from the second.'

The analogy must also have held true in respect of the manna and the water, mentioned in the text; or the argument of the apostle would have so far been imperfect. That the Corinthians had means and privileges answerable to this food of angels, and this water of life, is certain. They had the true bread from heaven; they had Christ, with all the blessings of his grace, set before them in the gospel, and many of them had eaten and drank thereof, to the support and salvation of their souls. Hence, the consistency and cogency of the admonition. The ancient Hebrews and the Corinthians were placed in the like responsible and spiritual positions, and were favoured and bound alike by their baptisms. If the congregation at Corinth had not been baptized, and laid under obligations by it, like the Hebrews, there would have been

nothing in Paul's argument to convince their judgment, to impress their consciences, or to guard their conduct.—With these prefatory explanations, we shall proceed to unfold the analogy stated in the heading of this part of our subject.

SECTION FIRST.—*In the text, Paul employs the same Greek verb to express the act of baptism unto Moses, (EBAPTIZANTO,) and the act of baptism unto Christ, (EBAPTIZONTO,) in Acts xviii. 8*—for the baptism of the Hebrews in the Sea, and for that of the first converts to Christianity in Corinth. The religious, spiritual, and ceremonial ideas he attaches to the baptism administered by his own hands and in his own times, he evidently attaches to the baptism of their remote, lineal, or ecclesiastical ancestors, in the cloud and in the sea. Whatever shades of difference there might be in the circumstantialia of these ceremonies, there were none that prevented the inspired writer from speaking of both as genuine and alike scriptural baptisms. In this sense the church at Corinth must have understood him—interpreting what he said by what they either had seen or personally experienced. Without some glossary or explanation, expressly indicating that he did not use the word in its current or ecclesiastical application; and that there were important and essential differences between the two baptisms; they could not have entertained a second opinion on the subject. They would naturally and even necessarily have conceived that the Israelites were, in all material points, baptized like the Christians; and that the Christians were, of course, as really baptized as the Israelites.

Nor does Mr. Stovel's language convey the slightest intimation, that, in his opinion, the administrations were not the same, both in fact and in effect, and the subjects physically and morally analogous. He does not question, that under the term 'Our Fathers,' all the Hebrew men, women, and children, who passed through the sea, are fairly and properly included; nor does he hint even a suspicion, (however it might have seemed to favour adult baptism exclusively,) that all the little ones, children and infants, were not baptized as really, as completely, as personally, and as purposely, as the male heads of the families, and the princes and elders of their tribes; and all these, too, as canonically and as scripturally as the congregation at Corinth. He does not here, at least, attempt to weaken the force and intent of the apostle's expressions, by saying (like some of his less intelligent brethren)

that the Hebrews were figuratively, or, *as it were*, baptized unto Moses ; or that the baptism itself was, in any of its leading particulars, inferior to, or, in principle and design, different from, that of the first Christian converts and their households. Indeed, it is not readily apparent how 'the doctrine of baptism' could derive a very powerful and solemn confirmation' from the words of Paul, unless the baptisms to Moses and to Christ were, in their essential properties, very much alike.

Mr. Noel correctly states the case, in a passage before quoted. 'As the Israelites had been baptized unto Moses ; so 'the Corinthians had been baptized unto Christ'....'there 'is a comparison between the baptism of the Israelites and 'the baptism of professed believers'—of course, he does not add—'and their children also ;' for that would have been too manifestly suicidal to his denominational object ! But, on the other hand, neither he nor any of his recent brethren, whose sentiments on the text I have just now cited, even once intimate that children were *not* baptized in the sea, the same as their parents. Had there been the shadow of evidence in favour of such an assumption, they doubtless would have seen and readily avowed it. The groundless exception and argument of Mr. Rees, I have noticed and answered already. Indeed, their cautiously overlooking the numerous little ones baptized in the sea, and proselyted by baptism, with their parents—a fact they must have well known—intimates the danger an avowal of it would have been to their cause ; and, therefore, tells us plainly that the establishment of it must greatly confirm our doctrine.

SECTION SECOND.—*The preposition* EIS, 'UNTO' *Moses, in the text, is the same as that used in Rom. vi. 3, EIS, 'UNTO' Christ.*—The objects are not one and the same in person, but the baptized were brought into the like relation to their respective heads and leaders—Moses and Christ. The converts to Christianity were consecrated, set apart, or disciplined, *unto* Christ, the Saviour, Lawgiver, and Ruler of the New Testament Church. 'Moses was the anointed Ruler of Israel, called in 'one place their Christ ; under his government they were 'called to glorify the God of their Fathers, either in the 'blessedness which resulted from obedience, or the punishment 'that was due for their rebellion.' The same language might be employed with equal relevancy concerning those who were baptized unto Christ. He was their Leader, Lawgiver, and King, in the highest degree. Moses was the head servant in

the ancient house of God ; Jesus was the first-born in his own house. Moses was a lawgiver to a nation ; Christ to all the later nations of the earth. Moses wrote what God dictated to him in the mount ; Christ revealed the will and spake the words of his Father who sent him. Both were intercessors in their respective spheres. Moses, it is true, was, in person and position, infinitely inferior to the Saviour, in many important particulars ; but as a prophet and a prince, he was the most eminent type of our Redeemer that ever lived on the earth. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken.' Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22.

Baptism is connected with faith in Christ and an open profession of the gospel. 'For ye are all the children of God by faith ; "for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." As if the apostle had said, you are his ; you have espoused his cause and professed his name ; you have thus declared your belief in his divine mission and doctrines, and are therefore bound to obey his commands. The apostle reasons on the same principle with the Galatians, who were for adding to the gospel the ceremonial law ; "I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," [though circumcised when only eight days old.] 'In like manner, we observe, every one that is baptized lays himself,' [or is laid by his parents, like the baby Israelite,] 'by that act, under an obligation to obey all the laws of Christ.' *Eaton*, p. 179. It is observable, that there is nothing in the objects or designs of Christian Baptism, of which children now are not as capable as they were formerly, respecting the ends of Hebrew circumcision. In this latter case, the young were consecrated to God, his laws, and his institutions, as revealed by his servant Moses. In the former case, they are consecrated to God, his laws, and his institutions, as revealed by his Son Jesus Christ. To be baptized to Christ as the Messiah, or unto the doctrine of his death, or to the obligations of repentance, or to the injunctions of the whole of evangelical truth ; involves no more difficulty than existed in olden times, in being circumcised to do the whole law. Indeed, there seems nothing involved in the intentions of this consecration which is not as congruous with the young as with the aged.

Now, as men, women, and children were consecrated unto Moses ; what valid reasons can be given why men, women, and children should not be also consecrated unto Christ ? It



was an honour to Moses, that the whole Hebrew family was baptized unto him, or to the laws and institutions enacted through his agency; and why should not Christ be honoured by all nations, without excepting children, which generally constitute a third of the population, being baptized unto him, and to that divine 'grace and truth' he came to exemplify and establish in the world at large? Those initiated unto Moses, were but one people, and, though abstractedly numerous, were comparatively few. Those that have been, and that shall yet be, disciples to Christ, will be innumerable even as the dew-drops of the morning. But to consecrate every age to Moses, and only those of adult age, or a small minority of the people prepared for the Lord, to the King of kings, appears to lower that pre-eminence in all things which Christ is really to sustain in the world, and to render his rule less comprehensive, literal, and gracious, than that enjoyed under the old dispensation.

Nor would this imagined disparity be met by alleging, that only the converted, the devout, the faithful, the intelligent, and the useful, should now be baptized unto Christ; and that, in the purity of his subjects, notwithstanding their comparative paucity, he is more honoured than he would be by having innumerable unconscious or inexperienced infants and children dedicated to him, and accounted as a portion of his holy inheritance. For, though all children are born in sin, and all have the latent seeds of human depravity in their natures; yet, in submission, docility, and innocence of life, they are more like the angels in heaven than the most righteous men in our churches; are as meet for glory, at a moment's notice, as any saint in existence; and, dying in that condition, they will as certainly enter the heavenly kingdom, as the most devout and devoted Christian in the land. If mental purity and moral innocence be essential or desirable prerequisites for baptism, none are more meet for the ordinance than new-born babes. Hence, to baptize such interesting immortal beings to Moses, and not to Christ, is to give greater honour to the servant, than to the Son, of God. It is remarkable, that our divine Lord not only said concerning little children, 'of such is the kingdom of God;' but, also, 'whosoever shall not *receive* the kingdom of God as a little 'child, he shall not enter therein.' Mark x. 15. We must receive the teachings and blessings of it with childlike docility and confidence. If the baptism of the Hebrews placed all the children, as well as all the adults, under the direction, instruction, and care of Moses; (and, that it did so, the

language of Mr. Stovel fully implies;) and, if this were a great mercy and blessing to them, as it certainly was; then, not to baptize children to Christ is, not officially to place them under his direction, instruction, and care. On the contrary, it would be leaving them, where the Hebrews stood prior to their baptism, without the pale of the baptismal covenant, and so unentitled to its subsequent religious advantages.

Our preceding statements, from unquestionable statistics, have also clearly shown, that numerous adults are baptized unto Christ by our opponents, and introduced to the communion of saints, who—as subsequent developments of unrighteous principles plainly evince—are not the converted, the devout, the faithful, the intelligent, or the useful; but the very reverse. We are also certain, that while human depravity, duplicity, and hypocrisy, remain, as at present, in mankind; and while the perceptive faculties of Baptist ministers, deacons, and churches, are not elevated, almost immeasurably, above their existing standard, the insincere, the ungodly, and the unsaved, will, in large numbers, be consecrated to Christ, by immersion, in times to come, as they have avowedly been in times past, in every country where our opponents proselyte and immerse people into their fellowships. The notion, therefore, that the virtues of the characters dedicated to the Saviour by our brethren, more than overbalance, in weight and worth, the numbers of children disciplined to Christ by Pedobaptists, is void of any force in this controversy.

Had the principles of our opponents been universally adopted, probably eight-tenths of the redeemed in glory would have been introduced there from among ourselves without having been scripturally consecrated to Christ here; while we have the saddest solid ground for believing, that in perdition a large portion of those immersed as adults, have found a miserable and an everlasting home. After these remarks, which few will attempt to controvert, the following passage of Mr. Noel reads somewhat awkwardly, especially with the insertions between the brackets, which are my own. ‘To witness the baptism of a believer’ [that is, of a professor] ‘must be useful to the members of the Church. Another soul is rescued by Almighty grace from perdition, and the church may share with angels in their joy over a repentant sinner,’ [if he be a real penitent.] ‘Another soldier enlists in Christ’s army, and his fellow-soldiers may renew their resolution to fight the good fight of faith,’ [if assured he will not soon become a deserter.] ‘At that sight, experienced

‘Christians must revive their old impressions’ [with many fears and misgivings] ‘when they first gave themselves to the Lord ; backsliders, moved to compunction at witnessing a faith so contrasted with their faithless wanderings, may repent,’ [or calculate on his backsliding also.] ‘Young Christians must rejoice to admit companions like themselves to the brotherhood of the saints ;’ [unless they should be, like thousands of others, no saints at all, but in name ;] ‘and the prayers and praises of many must ascend as an acceptable sacrifice to God,’ [for the introduction of possibly a deceiver or a deceived attendant, into the bosom of the inner church !] *Sub. p. 276.*

SECTION THIRD.—*Both baptisms placed the subjects of them under obligations to believe, obey, and love, their respective Heads.*—The entire argument of Paul is intended to develop and establish this noble design ; and Mr. Stovel’s exposition is intended to explain and confirm it. All the persons baptized unto Moses were, without any exceptions, bound to learn, approve, and keep, the laws he should afterwards promulgate among them. Whether, as adults, they walked through the dry channel of the sea, or, as children, were borne on the shoulders of their sires ; whether they had a full knowledge of their position, and of God’s design in their baptism, or were in total ignorance of both—as much so as all Hebrew infants were of the nature and intention of circumcision, or as the children of the Baptists are of their early dedication to Christ—if Israelites by birth or proselytism, or by association with them in their flight, and by which they became incorporated in their households or community, they were all baptized, and were thenceforward equally bound to hear, study, and keep the laws, statutes, and ordinances, which were to be subsequently delivered to them by their prophet, leader, and king in Jeshurun. In this respect, this baptism of the Israelites bore a striking resemblance to that of the first converts to the gospel. They and their families were placed under the special guidance and supervision of the apostles of Christ, or rather, indirectly, under Christ himself. Had not this been the apostle’s intention, his argument would have been wholly irrelative, and of no force, in promoting holiness of heart, consistency in life, and a continuance in evangelical obedience.

And, be it observed, the apostle does not exempt the young from the same obligations as those resting on persons of mature age, by saying or, in any way, intimating, that they had not been baptized like the Hebrew infants, and, conse-

quently, were not involved in the like claims of the baptismal covenant of the gospel. This, it is more than probable, he would have done had they not been duly consecrated to Christ. Indeed, we cannot possibly account for his not noting the exceptions, if they were actually made, in the ministrations of this ordinance at Corinth. One thing is certain, that as children were baptized by hundreds of thousands in the Red Sea, and frequently, if not regularly, afterwards in the wilderness, and in the Holy Land, where 'divers baptisms' must have been of daily, and all but of hourly, occurrence; and as this brought them under a covenant to hear, love, and obey God; so, for anything advanced to the contrary, children, under the Gospel dispensation, should be baptized, and thereby brought under covenant obligations, to learn of, to serve, and to glorify God, during the after portions of their earthly existence. These are quite as capable of being thus personally engaged and obliged to believe, honour, and obey the Saviour, the head of the Christian church, through all the subsequent years of their lives, as the Hebrew children were to learn of, believe in, and obey Moses, the visible lawgiver and ruler in Israel, or as were their own parents, and the most devout adult converts to the gospel. God, unquestionably, bound them all by the same baptismal covenant, and expected from every one of them, in after life, similar obedience, submission, and love.

SECTION FOURTH.—*The baptism unto Moses, in all its leading properties, agreed with the commission of Christ, recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*—In the latter, the apostles were enjoined to do either three or two distinct acts. Suppose the *former*. 'Go ye therefore and (1) Teach,' [proselyte as many as you can of] 'all nations; (2) Baptizing them in the 'name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; (3) Teaching 'them to observe all things whatsoever I command you.' Under Moses, the people were (1) Proselyted, or discipled to him, by being brought to regard and follow him as their appointed deliverer and guide; (2) They were all baptized or consecrated to him in the capacity of their Lawgiver and King; and (3) They were afterwards taught the statutes and ordinances of the Lord. One might almost conclude, that the Saviour had this Hebrew baptism in his eye, when his own commission was given to his eleven disciples. In both instances the same order was observed and similiar results ensued.—Or, suppose the *latter*, that only two distinct acts



were enjoined; then, these baptisms still equally accord. (1) 'Go ye therefore and proselyte, or disciple, by baptizing, 'as many as you can of all nations,' (2) 'Teaching them to 'observe all things whatsoever I command you.' It is argued, that the verb to *teach*, or proselyte, being immediately followed by the participle, *baptizing*; the meaning of the injunction is, to proselyte or disciple through this baptismal act; intimating that the persons were not to be recognized as full or complete disciples of Christ until they had undergone this ceremony. 'Disciple them, baptizing them,' says Matthew Henry, 'does not note two distinct acts, but the body and 'soul of the same act; as granting land by sealing a deed, or 'giving livery and seizin.'

Mr. Stovel's exposition of the baptism in the Red Sea harmonises with this latter construction of the passage. 'If 'they had so resolved before the passage, they might have 'turned back into Egypt; but not so after they had passed 'to the other side. From that moment they were under God, 'in the hands of Moses. By his means they' [all] 'received 'their direction, defence and subsistence.' They became full 'and pledged disciples' [of Moses] 'by their baptism.' It is therefore apparent, that the Hebrews were not fully proselyted or regarded as his duly inducted disciples till they had been baptized. But, the moment they had received this rite, they were recognised as being under Moses, 'their anointed ruler.' They were, in fact, made complete disciples through baptism, as literally stated in our Lord's commission. Mr. Stovel elsewhere says, 'no disciple was to be recognized in any other way 'than by baptism.' p. 239. And 'none were called disciples 'without their being baptized.' p. 207. Consequently, complete discipleship and baptism were about simultaneous. The practice of the apostles also sustains this exposition. There was no intermediate step, or purposely intervening space of time, between a conceded willingness to be baptized, and the baptizing itself; nor have we any proof, that persons were regarded as duly inducted and perfect disciples before they were baptized; while there are many texts indicating, that immediately on receiving this rite, the subjects were designated disciples in the proper sense of the terms—in agreement with the import of the commission, and the result of the baptism in the sea—commencing to learn the special doctrines, duties, and discipline of the gospel—as previously the Hebrews had learned the laws, statutes, and ordinances of Moses.

Still, as in the case of grown-up heathens, and Jews, or

ignorant unconsecrated adults generally, some kind and amount of teaching, inducement, or persuasion, must have been employed by ministers, in order to incline them to adopt the gospel scheme of religion, to regard Christ as the Messiah, and to become willing to receive instruction, before they would submit to be baptized, and thereby become recognised as actual and open disciples of divine truth; we will give our opponents the advantage, if any, of regarding the act as three-fold, instead of two. But, whether two-fold or three, the analogy is complete. It has been well remarked, that as the apostles preached rather scriptural facts, than systematical theology, to the unbaptized; so Moses performed miracles and issued commands, rather than taught divine laws, to the Israelites, prior to their baptism in the Red Sea: for even he himself was not acquainted with these heavenly statutes till sometime afterwards. Further, like Moses, to whom a whole people was consecrated at once, the apostles laboured to make proselytes of all nations, of all tribes and clans of mankind, or as many as possible among them; and had they been able to bring over to Christianity entire communities, however large, they would at once have baptized them all; just as God baptized all the Hebrews in the Red Sea.

After the Hebrews had been baptized, then Moses regularly trained them up in the laws of the Lord; and, in doing this, he spent many years among them in the wilderness. Parents were commanded to instruct their baptized families in the Word of God. 'And these words which I command thee 'this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them 'diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when 'thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the 'way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' Deut. vi. 6, 7. Similar injunctions are frequent in the writings of Moses. The young Hebrew disciples must be fully initiated into the doctrines and duties of their religion. In like manner, the apostles, or rather their assistants, endowed with various gifts, taught those previously baptized, from the least unto the greatest—from the little child, like young Timothy, to the man of hoar hairs. When churches were established in different parts of the world, means were adopted, by inspired men, to teach, by verbal addresses or by sacred epistles, all the members of them the entire revealed will of God, that they might be furnished unto every good word and work. Christianized parents are also frequently admonished to train up their families in the nurture and

admonition of that Lord to whom they had previously been consecrated in baptism.

As soon as the people of Samaria were induced to regard Philip as a messenger of saving truth, they were baptized, (Acts viii. 12) both men and women; and, doubtlessly, their children also. For, though the latter are not specifically mentioned, of their consecration to God, in this rite, we entertain not the slightest misgiving, any more than we do of those baptized in the sea, or than we do of the baptism of the Hebrew women, who are not numbered as being among the passing host; while even their children were particularly named. Ex. xii. 37. These Samaritan disciples were soon after visited, and fully instructed in the ways of the Lord, by two eminent apostles. This, it is true, was not a whole nation; but it was a whole city, possibly containing many thousands of inhabitants. John the Baptist purified and consecrated the people to Christ on the largest scale in his power. All they 'of Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the 'region round about Jordan, were baptized of him in Jordan, 'confessing their sins.' Having baptized them with water unto the approaching Redeemer; he then taught them more particularly the character, dignity, and work, of the Son of God; and directed them how to conduct themselves, as persons publicly professing a desire to receive and learn of the expected Messiah. And if all the Jews scattered abroad throughout the world had come to him for baptism, not one of them would have gone away without receiving this initiatory sacrament; nor have had long to wait for its administration. Three thousand were proselyted at once on the day of Pentecost, and were discipled to Christ, before the going down of the sun. And had the number of converts been twice as many, and been equally willing to submit to this initiatory rite, they, doubtlessly, would have been baptized on the same day, and been subsequently taught the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Neither does John seem to have been overworked in his baptizing operations; nor ever told any to wait awhile for their turn, or to come again the next week, or the next day. The deed was done off-hand, and at once. A sure sign that they did not dip their proselytes, one by one, as our opponents dip theirs. In every instance, the apostles followed their Lord's direction—proselyting and baptizing, and then teaching them all things whatsoever he commanded them. The case of Paul himself clearly expounds our views. He was made a convert by a miracle, a disciple by baptism, and

a wise and useful Christian by the instructions which his divine Master subsequently gave him.

On referring to the commission in Matthew, you will see that the apostles were directed to proselyte, baptize and teach all nations. Now, a nation—*ethnos*—whether you view it as embracing a clan, a tribe, the inhabitants of an island, or of a vast territory; you always suppose it as comprehending the entire population. You never set down the men of a country as a whole nation; nor all the women; nor all the children apart; but the whole of them combined. The Hebrew people baptized in the sea, travelling in the wilderness, or located in the Holy Land, constituted a nation. Were we to speak of the inhabitants of a county, city, town, or village, we should be universally understood as including every man, woman, and child in it. When it is said, a nation is benefitted, enlightened, or punished, we do not except any of its population, if capable of participating in the national good or evil. In this sense of the word *nation*, the apostles would naturally and of necessity understand the terms of the Saviour's commission. Had they been commanded and prepared to feed and clothe a whole nation; they would have administered the boon to all who could eat and wear apparel. Or had they been told to heal all the sick in a nation, they would have attended on afflicted infants as well as on diseased adults. Or had they been told to sprinkle or dip a nation, they would not have thought of exempting any who would receive their ablutions. If any exception were observed, it would arise from their own inability to execute their orders universally, or from some subsequent instructions or provisoes which would limit the range of their operations. Neither of these is noticed in the commission, or elsewhere in the word of God. We know that children form a large essential part of every nation; that they are capable of being baptized by affusion or immersion, or both; and the latter more easily than adults; that they have capacities for becoming benefitted disciples, even more readily than many old men and women. And, therefore, we conclude, that the apostles would not have fulfilled their commission, had they, purposely or needlessly, omitted to proselyte little children by baptizing them.

It has been often asserted, that John the Baptist instructed his audience fully before he baptized them. This is nowhere apparent. That he preached to them before he purified them, no one questions. As he wrought no miracles, it was only by such a mode of appeal that any were induced to regard him



as the messenger and herald of the Messiah. No adult would have been baptized by him, or by any one else, without some preface, explanations, or instructions. The question, however, arises, What did John actually teach the people before he baptized them? Taking for granted, that the topics of his ministration are indicated in the concise analysis preserved of his discourses, I will cite, at length, all John is said to have preached to his audiences, both before and after performing this ceremony.

‘And John did baptize in the wilderness, and came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.... But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for (or worthy of) repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that God is able, of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham. And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. And the people asked him saying, what shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came the Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? And he said unto them, do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ or not, John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water’ [unto repentance] ‘but one mightier than I cometh after me whose shoes I am not worthy to bear,’ [the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose,] he shall baptize you

‘with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. John bare witness of him and cried, saying, this is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me. And, looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. He must increase and I must decrease.’”

The above is the substance of all that is recorded of John’s preaching, doctrinally and didactically, as harmonized or collated by Doddridge; and, if we may judge from a careful examination of the connexion, we shall find, that nearly the whole was spoken to the people after their baptism, and not before; concerning a large part of it, this fact is unquestionable. We ask now, did John give his attendants even the rudiments or outlines of Christian truth either before he baptized them, or ever afterwards? Nothing of the kind. That he fulfilled his mission is clear; but of what did it consist? Certainly not of adequate instruction in Christian theology. He was sent to herald the coming Messiah; to prepare his way; to make ready a people to receive and welcome him; to enforce repentance and reformation of conduct; to consecrate them to Christ, by a general purification; to announce his advent; and then to resign his office. When asked a few questions on moral obligations, he answered wisely and freely. He denounced hypocrisy, dishonesty, and violence; and enforced integrity and generosity: or, as Henry has it, he endeavoured ‘To dispose the minds of people to receive the doctrines of Christ, that thereby they might be prepared for the comforts of his coming.’

This was just all he did in the way of religious education, or, at least, all that is recorded by the holy evangelists. Our opponents, who found their chief argument against Infant Baptism, on the supposed silence of Scripture, of course, will not attribute speeches, preachings, and doings, to him, out of their own imaginings, in order to make up a case in defence of their own opinions. The great work of unfolding and explaining the glorious truths, and enforcing the various and numerous duties of the gospel, he left to those who should come after him. His best disciples had to be instructed afresh; and many, if not all, of his converts, were undoubtedly baptized again. His teaching went no further than to induce the people to submit to his baptism, and thereby to become

consecrated to Him that was to follow. After their purification, they had nearly every thing to learn, properly designated religion; as had all others who were subsequently baptized by the disciples and apostles of Christ. Their baptism was but initiatory to further and fuller Christian instruction.

It may be proper here to explain to the general reader, why we have rendered the first verb '*To Teach*,' in our Lord's commission, by the word '*To Disciple*' or '*To Proselyte*;' while the second verb '*Teaching*' is left in its ordinary sense. The reason is, that the two verbs, in the Greek language, are essentially different, though translated in our English Testament by the same word. The first is *MATHETEUSATE* from *Matheteuo*, to be, or to be made a Disciple or Learner; the noun of which is *Mathetes*, a Pupil, Learner, or Scholar. The second *DIDASKONTES*, from *Didasko*, to Teach, Instruct, Educate; the noun of which is *Didaskalos*, a Teacher, Doctor, or Instructor. He will now readily perceive the difference between these words in the original scriptures. The former means to make, procure, or obtain pupils, disciples, or scholars, in the schools, seminaries, or colleges, of Christianity. The latter means to teach, instruct, or educate them when there. The language supposes the *Mathetes*, or scholar, to be ignorant of what the *Didaskalos*, or master, has to teach him. The pupils are presumed to come under the teacher's instruction, in order to acquire what they were ignorant of previously, either in nature or in degree. They attend his lessons, only to acquire a knowledge of what they understood not beforehand.

Hence, in the ordinary affairs of life, and in the due order of procedure, a youth or child becomes a pupil, before he reads his first lesson; an apprentice, before he commences operations in his new calling; a servant, before he does any work for his master; and a partner, before he transacts any business in the name of his firm. In all these instances, the covenant or ceremony that constitutes or recognizes the relationship, or fixes the position, of persons, precedes, or is supposed to precede, the acts done under or in consequence of it. Regular religious teaching, therefore, according to the commission, follows the baptism by which discipleship is recognized and confirmed. '*Discipling*,' says Dr. Lightfoot, 'was not of persons already taught, but to the end they should be taught; and if the disciples understood this word in Christ's command after any other sense, it was different from the sense of the word which the nation had ever used and only used.'

Dr. Byron, referring to Mark xvi. 15, 16, says, 'Here we 'have the word 'preach,' and which word, in the Greek, 'is *keruxate*, of the verb *kerusso*, the literal rendering of which 'is, to cry out aloud—to make publicly known—to proclaim '—to promulgate—to announce openly—to call loudly upon; 'and, therefore, *matheteusate* and *keruxate* alike convey the 'preaching of the everlasting gospel in its fullest sense.' p. 22. To use the Doctor's *own words*, in another part of his work, (p. 52,) I may remark, 'The author has reasoned nervously, 'shrewdly, and subtly; but, then, he has only laboured to 'convert a lie into the resemblance of truth. He has not only 'taken away the true and proper meaning of the Greek word,' *matheteuo*, but has also appended a sense to it, which is foreign to its real import. This he calls 'preaching the gospel in *its 'fullest sense*'—meaning to convey the idea to his credulous readers, that to make disciples or proselytes was the same as 'teaching all things which Christ commanded his apostles.' The one is no more like the other, than his school circulars, to obtain pupils, are like his fully instructing them in all knowledge from his professor's chair!

There is, consequently, a propriety, in the original terms of the commission which, by general consent, does not appear in the translation; and, in so important a law or institution, we may expect to find precision of expression, if it is to be found in any part of the divine oracles.—We now see how a little child may be made a disciple, without any prior instruction; how it may continue a disciple all its life time, or so long as it is learning the good knowledge of the gospel; and how a patriarch may die an aged disciple, studying the profound mysteries of the Saviour's reign to the end of his days. The mere will, or expressed desire, of the parent, on behalf of his children, is all that is requisite prior to their baptism, or formal initiation into the free school of Christianity; and, then, becoming properly matriculated disciples, they are to be judiciously taught the doctrines of our religion—giving them the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. All places of pure Christian worship, and all the Scriptural ordinances of the gospel conducted in them, are but school-houses and means of educating souls in the divine doctrines, laws, and discipline, of our holy religion, and of training immortal spirits for the high and holy vocations of heaven.

Adult heathens, unbelievers, or Jews, may require many arguments, invitations, and warnings, before they will submit to become disciples by baptism. In the apostolic age,



Israelites and idolaters had to be convinced by miracles, impressive facts, and striking arguments, and to be turned from their former systems and services, before they would submit to receive the rite of Christian baptism. They had to become like little children, emptied of all high thoughts of themselves, and to be submissive as infants in the hands of God, before they could sit with profit in the schools of the holy evangelists. Indeed, the more they became like babes, the better were they prepared for baptism and religious instruction. Now, if to be like children in meekness, docility, and confidence, be the chief qualification for initiation into the external privileges of Christianity; surely children themselves must be better qualified for baptism than most adults, however humble and sincere—and who, at best, are but like copies of the beautiful originals. These latter have nothing to unlearn, no intellectual prejudices against the Word of God; and the corruption of their natures has not yet ripened into confirmed habits of ungodliness. Christ never said of any, except little children, ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven.’

Further, the apostle says, that the children of believing parents are ‘Holy.’ 1 Cor. vii. 14. This, however, cannot mean by birth, and probably not by regeneration; for he speaks of the children of believers generally. But it may be by dedication, consecration, or by being set apart for the Lord; for such is the sense of the term holy or sanctified, in numerous passages of scripture. And if they were officially dedicated to God by the apostles, it was unquestionably by water-baptism. This appears to be the sense of the expression in the text now referred to—no other harmonizing with the current purport of scripture doctrine. To suppose that the word means *legitimate*, is totally at variance with its use in every other part of the inspired writings. Baxter observes, ‘The word ‘Holy is used nearly 600 times in scripture for a relative ‘holiness, and a separation to God, and never for legitimacy.’ The term *hagios*, holy, is used to express a nation or people consecrated to God, and is opposed to *akathartes*, unclean. Acts x. 28. The latter Greek word also means heathen—not devoted to God. See Is. xxxv. 8, lii. 1. The apostle persuades the believing husband not to put away his unbelieving wife, and the believing wife not to leave her unbelieving husband; but to do all in their power to save their unconverted companions. But would he have reasoned in this fashion had he felt they were living in adultery, and that their children were consequently illegitimate or bastards? Impossible. His

injunction would surely have been, get married immediately. Paul's doctrine evidently is, that natural and social ties should not be severed in consequence of a person's conversion to God. 'Let not the wife depart from her husband.'—'Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called.'

Let me remark, that to induce adult Jews and heathens to become disciples of Christ, by being baptized, the apostles exerted all their efforts, wrought all their miracles, endured a great fight of affliction; leaving it, for the most part, with others, probably less gifted with miraculous powers and preaching talents, to train up the converts in the faith and practice of the gospel; while they themselves pressed forward to make fresh proselytes or disciples to the religion of Christ. Nor should we overlook the important fact, that though the term disciples is employed in a general, as well as in a limited sense—embracing the young and the aged, the unrenewed and the regenerated, the more or the less instructed, ordinary believers, and the twelve personal associates of the Son of God—yet it is clear, that it is never used to designate the occasional hearers of the truth. 'Then, in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, &c.' Luke xx. 45. 'And as he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, then are ye,' [or shall be,] 'my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' John viii. 30-32. Something beyond believing was required of people before they were recognised as Christ's actual disciples. (See v. 40.) What that was, the language of the commission renders manifest—being baptized, and thereby entering the school of Christianity. Then they became his disciples by position and profession, if not 'disciples indeed.' The public teacher or lecturer on art, science, or philosophy, does not reckon those his disciples who simply congregate to hear his first general expositions, or the outlines of his principles; but those only who formally place themselves, or who are placed by others, under his more private and systematic instructions. It may be safely assumed, that no persons, old or young, openly become disciples of Christ till dedicated to him by baptism. The question is, at what age may this discipleship begin? All reply, as soon as the first elements of Christian truth can be received or felt. And as this may be effected very early in childhood, it follows, that very early in childhood, the young may and should be disciplined to Christ by Christian baptism.

SECTION FIFTH.—*The literal designation of those baptized in the sea, and under the New Testament economy, is substantially the same.*—They are called ‘Our Fathers’ in the former case, and commonly ‘Men’ in the latter. This was the ordinary method of designating large indiscriminate bodies of people, and, indeed, of people generally, though comprehending a mixture of both sexes and of all ages. This held true, not only among the Hebrews, but also among most, if not all, other nations—the male sex including the female, and the parents their children. Paul says, ‘Our Fathers’ were baptized: he does not say, ‘Our Mothers’ were baptized also. He speaks literally of males, but not a word about females; and of adults, without specifying young people or infants, though the latter were baptized the same as the former. The like rule will apply to other cases beside that of baptism, of which numerous examples might be given. Take two or three as specimens. In Josh. viii. 25, 26, the Israelites are said to have destroyed all the men and women in Ai; yet we learn from the facts of the narrative, that all the children were destroyed also. ‘But,’ says Moses, ‘over your brethren of the children of Israel ye shall not rule with rigour.’ Might they rule with rigour over females? ‘Hear between your brethren, and judge righteously, between a man and his brother.’ Did not this include females in the intention of the law, though sisters or women are not mentioned? ‘If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates—thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother.’ Would not this law equally oblige a kindly regard to a poor sister, and also to destitute children of both sexes?

John is said literally to have baptized males only, and those only adults. There is no express record of any women or children having been baptized by him. But the comprehensive phraseology of the sacred historians indicates that he must have done so, if there were any women and children in the country. The terms ‘all Jerusalem, Judea, and the region round about Jordan; as rationally included them as the words all our Fathers’ necessarily comprehended all the women and children originally consecrated unto Moses. We might as safely challenge an opponent to prove, that children were not present and baptized by John, as to prove that none were baptized unto Moses; for though evidently included in both cases, they are specifically noticed in neither. The three thousand spoken of as baptized on the day of Pentecost, are

all written in the masculine gender, though most probably there were, at least, some women among them. The Saviour was seen of five hundred *brethren* at once; not a sister is said to have been present; but undoubtedly not a few were there. The five thousand converts, mentioned soon after, are all designated 'men.' All those said to have communicated at the Lord's table, during the entire apostolic age, are set down as males. All the sacred epistles are directly, and, in the original Scriptures, literally, addressed to the saints of the masculine order—sanctified males, and 'holy brethren;' as if no females, of any rank or age, were incorporated in these sacred fellowships. Again, when the first preachers of the gospel appealed to the multitudes, congregated in the open air, or in the temple, or in the synagogues of the Jews, 'men 'and brethren,' are literally addressed, and not men and women, nor brethren and sisters. We, however, gather from incidental remarks, in the letters and discourses of the apostles, and from the historical narratives of Luke, that there were holy women in the churches, and females in the congregations. And we may conclude, with equal confidence, and from similar data, that young people and children were present also; though not literally addressed, in the superscriptions of the letters, nor in the introductions to the sermons. Hence, children, not being literally named among the baptized, affords no fair argument against the assumption of their having undergone this Christian rite.

Dr. Halley, having pointed out the improbability of respectable women in Judea being exposed to the gaze of promiscuous crowds, and submitting to be immersed in the Jordan by John the Baptist; Mr. Noel replies, 'All these imaginary 'objections, without a particle of positive evidence on the 'subject, cannot weigh against the plain narrative'—which, by the way, affords no positive proof that John immersed a single individual. Mr. Noel continues, 'But nothing whatever 'is said of any female converts; there might have been no 'women in the crowds, or very few.... Few of them would 'leave their homes to go out into the wilderness amidst a 'promiscuous crowd. When Jesus fed the five thousand 'with five loaves, and the four thousand with seven loaves, 'on each occasion the number of women and children were 'not counted, as adding inconsiderably to the whole amount.' *Mode*, p. 81. This passage concedes the difficulty of dipping females at all—whether many or few. And it must be assumed, that none were immersed, or that multitudes might



have undergone the ceremony ; for if the rite were unseemly or indelicate in the case of a thousand, it was equally so in the case of one. His notion, that, because these women and children were not counted, they must have been comparatively few, is perfectly gratuitous. When the Hebrews journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, it is said there were ‘six hundred thousand men, besides children ;’ Ex. xii. 37 ; not naming a woman among them. But did not the women and children, notwithstanding, add considerably to the whole amount—most likely numbering three or four to one of the men over twenty years of age ? The possibility is, that our Lord, on each occasion, fed nearer twenty thousand than four or five. The females and little ones, it is likely, might have been too many to count with ease, as to have been too insignificant in numbers to require notice. The men leaving Egypt were only counted ; the others, surely, were not passed over because they were numerically unimportant.

‘The women of Samaria were baptized ;’ and ‘honorable women not a few,’ believed and, of course, were baptized, though, assuredly, not publicly immersed in water by men, and strangers too ! That John baptized women as well as men, and probably, (if we may judge from the practice of our opponents, who dip far more of the weaker sex than of the stronger,) the principal part of his converts was composed of women. Private baptisms were few, and probably none, in preference, or purposely so. The attempt to meet the difficulty of the operation, in reference to females, either as to the indecency of the act, or as to the masculine designation of the baptized, only shows that our opponents are not entirely without their perplexities, either in opposing Infant Baptism, or in defending the immersion of their noble and delicate sisters in the faith.

When women and children are verbally or literally noticed, as forming a portion of the persons present in the church, congregation, or assembly, or as engaged in some sacred act, or as undergoing some religious ceremony, it was an exception to the common rule of the Hebrew writers, whether prophets or historians ; and arose from some special reason for departing from their ordinary modes of speech—but the nature of which we may not always be able to comprehend. The women of Samaria and Lydia of Philippi, are the only females baptized by the apostles, whose sex is expressly mentioned in the divine narratives. We read of men and their households, or of families, being baptized ; but, with the foregoing exceptions,

of no females, of any rank or age. We may here note, that had not these solitary cases been incidentally recorded, we should have had no direct or literal evidence to show that any women had ever been baptized by the apostles or other ministerial servants of the Lord, any more than of the baptism of the women and the children in the Red Sea. As it is, we have only inference to prove, that any females, besides the above, actually underwent this ceremony, though not a shadow of doubt can rest on any reasonable mind, that tens of thousands of them were initiated into the public teachings of Christianity, through this holy ordinance. Persons who adopt the principle, that the silence of Scripture is a sufficient proof that infants were not baptized, because they are not expressly named, would, by the same rule, find it difficult to show, that any females, besides the above, however impressed with the preachings and miracles of the apostles, were baptized unto Christ; or, indeed, that a single female descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, during the apostolic age, was baptized at all—the Samaritan women and Lydia probably not being Jewesses in the direct line of natural descent from the Patriarchs. But as Paul necessarily included women and children, under the terms ‘Our Fathers,’ in his epistle to the Corinthians, so we feel warranted in believing, that women and children, though not expressly mentioned, were also comprehended in the terms ‘Men,’ ‘Brethren,’ and ‘Saints’ in the masculine gender, in other recorded cases of baptism, by the New Testament writers. If they were not, it certainly devolves on our good opponents to prove their own adverse assumptions.

SECTION SIXTH.—*The Baptisms to Moses, of John, and of the Apostles, were all and alike from heaven.*—God was the author of them all. In that of the Red Sea, the administration was immediately by Jehovah himself, the sole Head, Lawgiver, and King, in Israel; manifestly without the intervention of any human agency, even as much as the lifting up of Aaron’s rod. Indeed, no mortal instrumentality was adequate to so great a work, in so short a time; especially if there were an individual or separate reception of the consecrating element, by all the vast multitudes that passed through the deep—on dry land. This must have been effected, either with the spray of the water, blown by the winds of heaven, or by the clouds, that poured out rain, at God’s command, upon them. Ps. lxxvii. 17; so that, like Nebuchadnezzar, who was wetted (literally, *baptized, Greek,*) with the dew of heaven, (Dan. iv.

25, 33,) they were baptized from above, by the Almighty himself. In either case, the whole people were thus virtually and really consecrated unto Moses, or, rather, to his laws and institutions; and, thereby, laid under obligations, religiously and scrupulously to learn of, to love, to obey, and to glorify God.

Nor were the designs of this consecration unworthy of Jehovah. The baptized were thereby bound not to lust after evil things, nor to become idolaters, nor to commit fornication, nor to tempt Christ, nor to murmur at his dispensations. But, on the other hand, they were to use all appointed and appropriate means to obtain divine blessings, and to promote the divine glory. It introduced them to the privilege of eating spiritual food, and of drinking spiritual drink, which were striking types of high and holy advantages. 'They were treated as men in the hands of God.' The Lord avouched them to be his people, his portion, and his treasure. He gave them the sacred oracles, an altar, and a mercy seat. They could easily and freely draw nigh unto him for advice; for he dwelt in the midst of their tents—a position he had never so manifestly and permanently assumed among them till that time. They had types, tokens, and ordinances, directing them to the Lamb of God; and ministers of religion appointed and competent to lead them into the then revealed laws of heaven. To all these moral and religious benefits they were inducted by their baptism in the Red Sea. 'From that moment they were under God, in the hands of Moses.' They were then, for the first time, formed into a duly organized and fully officered *ecclesia*, church, or congregation, by the Lord himself, for his worship and glory—he continuing to be their supreme visible Head and King. The baptism of the Hebrews, therefore, was not only from heaven, but was also especially interesting and important in its results.

The baptisms recorded in the New Testament were no less of divine authority, nor less beneficial in their consequences. John was 'sent to baptize,' as the priest had done before him. The people regarded him as a prophet of God; and must, therefore, have viewed his ablutions and consecrations as the result of a divine commission. Nor would his ritual be the less from heaven, because he was following the mode enjoined on his predecessors—for they received their instructions primarily from God. As sacrifices and the passover, administered in the time of the Harbinger, were originally of God, so was this baptism from heaven. Christ commanded his disciples to proselyte and baptize all nations. These baptisms introduced

the recipients of them to blessings equal, if not superior, to those conferred on the baptized Hebrews. They became obliged to learn the laws and statutes of the gospel, and to keep them; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah from heaven, promised to their fathers. It entitled them to seats in the seminaries of the gospel, and to a full acquaintance with the mysteries of Christian truth. They had the right of entrance into the assemblies of the faithful, to the privileges of catechumens, and to a candidateship for subsequent full communion with the perfected saints of God. But, though Christian baptism was administered at a time of more light, when there was a fuller development of the great plan of salvation, and when it was accompanied by many advantages not recognized so distinctly at the time of the baptism in the Red Sea, or by the Hebrews afterwards; yet, in its origin, and in all the leading features of a religious baptism, it was on a par with that which God himself originally administered. While, on the other hand, it may be assumed, that had not the baptism of the Israelites been of high importance, and little or nothing behind Christian baptism, in significance, benefits, and obligations, as well as in the range and grades of its subjects; the argument founded on it, by the Apostle Paul, would have been of no adequate force in his present logical and powerful address to the Corinthians.

It may be fairly inferred, that as the baptisms unto Moses, by John, and by the apostles of our Lord, originated entirely with one and the same divine Being, as wise and kind at first as ever afterwards; since the design in each case was essentially the same—being the introduction of the baptized to great religious blessings and obligations; they were also alike in their subjects and modes of administration; or, at all events, they could not have been so entirely distinct and directly opposite to each other as the exclusion of children, and the dipping of adults only, in New Testament times, would have evidently rendered them. Had these ordinances originated with different lawgivers—not of one mind, but of conflicting judgments—or had they been appointed for widely different purposes, symbolizing different spiritual operations, and laying the baptized under widely different obligations; it might be conceded, that the subjects and modes of this initiatory rite, in Christian times, would have varied from those first performed in the Red Sea. But it is passing all debate, that the design, in every leading particular, was the same, whether this rite were administered in the Red Sea, in the Jordan, or in the



city of Jerusalem; that the great and ever-blessed God was the sole author of them all; and that, in fact, and in effect, these different administrations were essentially but one water-baptism, observed through a long series of ages, in the one church or congregation of God. Can we, then, bring our minds to believe, without the plainest and most positive proof from Scripture—which is silent respecting any alteration in the case—that while the first great religious administration of this ordinance on record embraced tens of thousands of infants and children; under the gospel economy, all little ones, even the offspring of the most devoted followers of the Saviour, were excluded from it? Or, that while to baptize them was originally deemed lawful and right, it would now be will-worship, and a sin against God? All this, too, while the development of light and mercy was becoming more glorious, and the platform of religion daily more extended! We might have as reasonably expected, that, though children were taught and trained religiously under the law, they were to be brought up in ignorance under the gospel; or that, though they were of high moral and spiritual interest and consideration in the times of Moses, David, and Malachi, they were now to be of no, or of very, small account in the New Testament churches of Christ!

Akin to this view of water baptism, is that of the Holy Ghost. 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,' [one 'general assembly,'] 'whether we be Jews or Gentiles, 'whether we be bond or free.' 1 Cor. xii. 13. Whoever have been 'baptized with the Holy Ghost,' have been 'born 'again of the Spirit.' Without this baptism, none have been renewed or introduced to the congregation of heaven above—not excepting the purest offspring of the holiest saints on earth. This gracious and saving operation has ever been the same in the soul of a child and that of an adult; though the practical developments of it have not been so speedily and equally manifest to human observation. It will not be denied, that from the exodus of Israel, when numerous symbolical expositions were first openly and divinely instituted—though probably existing among the Hebrews before—to the time of Christ, millions on millions of babies, who died in their infancy, as well as myriads on myriads of redeemed men and women, were thus spiritually and savingly baptized by the Holy Ghost. The legitimate inference is, that, as the same spiritual baptism prevailed under the Old and New Testaments; so the same water-baptism, which was instituted, or, at least, largely

practised in the time of Moses, was continued, in all its essential properties, up to, and long after, the days of the apostles. To assume so vast a change, as our opponents must contend for, in order to maintain or countenance their doctrine of exclusive adult and believers' baptism, is far beyond the powers of our comprehension.

Again, if water-baptism was an appropriate sign of spiritual baptism at the Red Sea, it was equally so at the Jordan, and in Corinth; and if infants might have received this symbol of regeneration fifteen hundred years before, they surely might receive it in the times of the apostles. It is certain, and universally conceded, that the principal, the most apparent, and the most instructive symbol of baptism by the Holy Ghost, is baptism with water. If, therefore, water-baptism were not common and continuous during the Hebrew economy, as it was universal at the time of the exodus from Egypt, there would have been a serious lack of the most appropriate symbolical teaching during fifteen hundred years of the Church of God; and that, too, under a system of religion abounding in signs, types, and tokens of spiritual and saving blessings. This appears altogether improbable. But admit the foregoing view of the case, and you will perceive perfect consistency and harmony in the subject.

In our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, he told him, that 'Except a man' [any one] 'were born of water and of the Spirit, he could not enter the kingdom of God,' adding, 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?' John iii. 5, 10. Does not this language plainly imply, that the terms of admission to the church, in former times, had been the same as they would be for the time to come? Is it not clear, that the Saviour referred to the past, as well as to the present and future? This supposition is confirmed by the question proposed to the Rabbi—How it happened that he, a teacher among the Jews, should not have known this—a doctrine so ancient and so universal among his countrymen? Nor does it appear, that Nicodemus was ignorant of the fact of water and spiritual baptism. He, most probably, was nonplussed at the expression—indicating that a person must be BORN *again*, or BORN of *water* and of the *Spirit*: being forms of speech new to him, never having read them in the Old Testament—though, with the idea of purifying the soul, symbolically by water, and the Spirit—of analogous import—he might have been familiar. Or, he might have been surprised that our Lord should have made the declaration to apply so

generally, including old men and Rabbis, while his notion might have been, that none but children or proselyted adults underwent this regeneration. Be that as it may, nothing can more fully express the views of our divine Master, that water-baptism was a standing ordinance in the ancient church, however the Rabbi might have misunderstood the import of his divine phraseology. Indeed, there seems an impossibility of arriving at any other satisfactory conclusion from the language here employed. This view of the passage fully corroborates the doctrine we have been advocating throughout—that there was water-baptism under the law as well as under the gospel—whether applied to new-born babes, in conjunction with circumcision—to the purifying of the unclean, or to the initiation of proselytes. How this case can be construed into a contrary sentiment, I am unable to imagine.

To this may be added—though diverging from the immediate object before us—that as God's first administration of this ordinance was unquestionably by sprinkling, affusing, or aspersing, the Hebrews, old and young, with the spray of the sea, or the rain of heaven, the latter of which probably few of them had ever seen before (for rain scarcely ever falls in Egypt)—and as the purifications and sanctifications of the people, during the whole Jewish dispensation, as administered by the priest—God's appointed servant and substitute to them—were by sprinklings, affusings, or pourings, and never by dipping the bodies of the Jews under water; we may safely infer, that God would not, and did not, appoint a directly opposite mode of baptizing among his disciples, in after and gospel times; at least, we shall contend that he did not, until stronger proof to the contrary be given than our immersing friends have hitherto furnished. If sprinkling or affusing were sufficient at the very time when Jehovah was about to impose the burdensome ceremonies of the legal economy on his people; surely, it would be sufficient in the later ages and the simpler services of the Christian church—the yoke of which was to be easy, and the burden light.

I think I have elsewhere proved, that such a change was never made, and that the mode of baptism, from the days of Moses to those of Christ, and long after, continued to be by sprinkling, affusing, or by the application of the water to the person, and not by dipping, immersing, or the application of the person to the water. If the Almighty did actually make so great an alteration in this ancient ordinance, as to exclude

all children from its administration, and to dip the subjects, instead of sprinkling them; it behoves our good Baptist brethren to show us where it may be plainly discovered in the inspired volume. Mr. Noel and others enlarge on the assumption, that proselytes were dipped by the Jewish Priest; but can they give us a single clear or positive instance in support of the supposition from the *word of God*? We believe not; and until they have done so, their quotations from the later Rabbis will not weigh to the amount of a feather against the inspired command for *the priests simply to sprinkle the unclean*.

Our Baptist brethren cannot reasonably object to be challenged to produce an instance in which it is apparent, that any service, institute, or rite, of the Old Testament, evidently continued, with the divine sanction, in the New; wherein the change is so great as that which must have taken place in respect of the mode and subjects of baptism, as first administered in the Red Sea, and practised by themselves in the present day. As far as we can judge, praying, preaching, singing, hearing, and worshipping generally, were essentially the same in the days of Moses, and in the time of Paul. The elements of the Lord's supper are confessedly the same as were eaten by the Hebrews after partaking of the paschal lamb. The like holiness, devotion, and faith, were required of the people of God under both economies. We speak not, of course, concerning the types, symbols, rites or regulations, which were peculiarly and especially Jewish or Patriarchal, and which were plainly and positively done away in Christ, or rendered impracticable by the disruption of the Hebrew commonwealth; but only of those institutions, modes, and regulations which were evidently and intentionally preserved from the former to the present dispensation of divine truth. We believe that no similar change, nor anything approaching it, can be discovered in any act or rule adopted from the Old Testament and embodied in the New, so great as that of converting sprinkling into dipping in baptism, and of excommunicating children from communion with their parents in this initiatory rite. This fact, to say the least of it, affords high presumptive evidence, that no such alteration was ever made; and that Infant Sprinkling is still scriptural and obligatory on all Christian parents.

SECTION SEVENTH.—*The baptisms unto Moses and unto Christ, agreed in this, that neither of them conveyed*



*spiritual regeneration, nor guaranteed holiness of life.*—Being new creatures was certainly not an essential prerequisite to baptism in the Red Sea; nor was such a divine change effected by its administration. All were baptized unto Moses; ‘but with many of them God was not well pleased . . . for they lusted after evil things . . . some of them became idolaters . . . committed fornication . . . tempted Christ . . . and murmured against God and his servant Moses.’ In consequence of this wickedness, ‘they were overthrown in the wilderness . . . in one day fell three-and-twenty thousand of them . . . they were destroyed of serpents . . . and of the destroyer.’ But two males, of twenty years old and upwards, who were baptized in the sea—who, ‘under God, were placed in the hands of Moses . . . their anointed ruler,’ and who were ‘called to glorify the God of their fathers’—eventually entered Canaan; though it is more than probable, that hundreds of thousands of the children, baptized at the same time, gained the promised land. Here, then, we have proof, painful and abundant, that regeneration and spiritual sanctification were not necessary prerequisites to the reception of the ceremony, nor actually connected with the operation, nor effected as a consequence of it—most certainly not, in the adult portion of the Hebrews. ‘Now,’ says Paul, ‘these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.’ Let him that imagines he was regenerated when, or because, he was baptized, and guaranteed holiness and stability in his profession, take heed lest he be deceived.

What else could be Paul’s idea, but that some, at least, of the baptized Corinthians, consecrated, too, by apostolic hands, or by apostolic directions, unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the gospel of the grace of God, were yet unconverted in heart, and in danger of committing sins like the Hebrews in the wilderness—not excepting the most flagrant and deadly of them. All this he strongly guards them against; though they were *intimately associated with*, and, as fellow-worshippers, identified with, an *ecclesia*, or congregation, which he styles, the church of God—the sanctified in Christ Jesus—the called to be saints—the recipients of divine grace, endowed with gifts, knowledge, and all utterance. ‘Wherefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.’ He felt that it was necessary to warn some of them against the vilest and most iniquitous sins of which unregenerated men could be guilty—that of dethroning

God from their hearts, and ostensibly setting up gold, silver, wood, and stone, in his place; and paying them the homage which the Supreme only can justly demand—and then perishing for their crimes, under the divine wrath, like thousands of the baptized, yet ungodly, Hebrews in the wilderness.

The apostle evidently employs the style of the Old Testament in the New; and it is necessary to study the import of the terms used by Moses and the prophets to understand the sense of the same words used by the evangelists and apostles; as also to look well into the institutions of the ancient dispensations fully to comprehend the nature of those pertaining to the gospel. 'From their covenant relation to Almighty God, the whole Jewish nation are in the Scriptures frequently termed holy; and the apostles, being Jews by birth (though they wrote in Greek,) have often applied to Christians the phraseology of the Old Testament, in order to convey to them accurate ideas of the magnitude of God's love to them in Christ.' *Horne's Int.* p. 3. In fact, had not the New Testament writers adopted this mode of teaching, the early Hebrew Christians could not have understood the import of half the apostles wrote or spoke to them. 'The Jews told the baptized proselyte that he was now taken out of his unclean state and put into a state of sanctity or holiness. So the Scriptures of the New Testament do call the baptized Christians the saints, the holy, the sanctified in' [or unto] 'Christ Jesus; and say that the church of them is sanctified' [set apart] 'with the washing of water.' *Wall*, vol. 1. p. 27.

It may confirm this view of the subject, if we refer to Paul's description of some of the baptized Corinthians, to whom this and the second epistle are addressed. 'Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some' [of you] 'have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.' 1 Cor. xv. 34. 'There were heresies' or, rather, heretics 'among them.' *Ib.* xi. 19. 'Ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.' ch. vi. 8. 'It is commonly reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.' ch. v. 1, 2. 'I fear lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they

‘have committed.’ 2 Cor. xii. 21. I again ask, could the apostle believe that *all* the people he addressed in his epistles to the *ecclesia*, or congregation, at Corinth, were spiritually regenerated persons? Unquestionably not.

On the last quotation Dr. Macknight remarks:—‘Those of whom the apostle speaks were such of the faction, who, notwithstanding all he had written in his former letter, had not refrained from partaking in the idolatrous sacrifices of the heathens, and from the lewd practices connected with idolatry, to which, by their former education, they were still addicted.’ Could these have been divinely enlightened and savingly converted Christians? Or, can we readily believe that, when their conduct became known to the pious members of the society, they would be admitted among them? Or, that, if once admitted, would be allowed long to remain there? At any rate, should such have crept into the spiritual fellowship of the saints, Paul assures them they were quite out of their place.—‘Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Though such were in the congregation at Corinth, which was open to all properly conducted attendants; yet we can hardly suppose they were in their spiritual communion! Certainly we cannot imagine the apostle to have included them among those ‘sanctified in Christ, called to be saints, and for whom he gave thanks to God always on their behalf, for the grace of God which was given to them by Jesus Christ, as being enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge, &c.’ 1 Cor. i. 2, 5.

It will, however, be replied, that after Paul had stated the characters who should not inherit the kingdom of God, he subjoined verse 11. ‘And such were some of you: but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ This, Dr. Macknight paraphrases, ‘And such were many of you formerly, but ye are washed with the water of baptism in token of your having vowed to lead a new life; and ye are consecrated to the service of God; and ye are delivered from heathenish ignorance by the power of the Lord Jesus, and by the influence of the Spirit of the God of the Christians.’ In a note, he subjoins, ‘This being addressed to the Corinthian brethren in general, it is not to be imagined, that the apostle, by their being washed, sanctified, and justified, meant to

'say, they were all holy persons in the moral sense of the word, and that they were all to be justified in the day of judgment. Among the Corinthians were many unholy persons whom the apostle reprov'd sharply for their sins. '2 Cor. xii. 20, 21. And whom he threatened to punish severely, if they did not repent.' 2 Cor. xiii. 1. This view of the above texts harmonizes their apparent difficulties. We must either admit the internal society of that people to have been fearfully and unprecedentedly corrupt; or assume that, while the apostle was speaking the language of consolation to the spiritual and consistent members of the select body, he, at the same time and in the same letter, strongly reprov'd the ungodly attendants in the general congregation—a very natural course for this holy man of God to follow.

Indeed, if this latter purport of the passages be not conceded, one of two things must follow. *First*, that there were no regular worshippers at Corinth who had not been converted, who were not living holy lives, and who were not united with the pious members of the internal Christian communion. Or, *Secondly*, that, though there were such ungodly attendants in their usual worshipping assemblies, and who needed strong reproof on account of their sad misconduct; the apostle said not a word to them, in an epistle to be read before the entire congregation. As neither of these assumptions appears at all probable; we infer, that our previous conclusions are correct,—That he primarily inscribed his letter to what we usually call the church; and in it said many severe things to the ungodly members of the congregation, generally associated with them in public worship.

Here, in passing, I would suggest, that, when Paul advised the church or congregation at Corinth to put away from among themselves that wicked person who had committed sins, 'which were not so much as named among the Gentiles;' (1 Cor. v. 13); he referred to some baptized individual who was one of their usual fellow-worshippers, but not one of the members of their holy and inner spiritual fellowship. He advises the more virtuous and godly attendants to discountenance, and not to keep company with, such an unrighteous person; in fact, not to allow him the privilege of being a recognized associate in their sanctuary—where he might be regarded as identified with themselves—until he had repented, and abandoned his wicked conduct. Of course, this is only conjecture, and upon it I shall lay no special stress. But it accords with the Apostle's views of what a Christian society



should be; and with the style he was likely to employ in addressing a mixed assembly of people, meeting most probably in a hired house, or in the dwelling of some friend to the Christian cause. For effecting this object, the early Christians would not be without something like a precedent. We learn that the Jews were in the habit of casting obnoxious attendants out of their synagogues, and thereby hindering them from worshipping with them in the common services of God. It is also said, 'The *Cheimazomeni* of the early church, 'were such penitents, as from the heinousness and aggravation 'of their crimes, were not only expelled out of the communion 'of the church, but cast out of the very *atrium*, or court and 'porch of the church, and put to do penance in the open air, 'where they stood exposed to the inclemency of the weather.' —*Faiths of the World*. Does this throw any light on the case before us?

Since this idea of addressing a people, as saints, as holy, and the like, a part of whom were certainly unrenewed and unrighteous, may be rather puzzling to some of my readers; I beg to explain it further, by a reference to the Old Testament. How often did God apply epithets to the Hebrew nation, which, while expressing his interest in them, and his approbation of them, as his people, evidently prove, that many, if not, at times, the majority, of them were unconverted and wicked people. A few quotations will establish this doctrine. Ex. v. 1. 'Let my people go.' These were the Hebrews in Egypt, most of whom afterwards perished for their sins in the wilderness. Is. i. 3, 4. 'My people doth not consider. . . . a people laden 'with iniquity.' Jer. ii. 13, 32. 'My people have committed 'two great evils. . . . my people have forsaken me, they are 'sottish children.' Ib. i. 5, 7. 'I will destroy my people, since 'they return not from their ways.' Hos. iv. 6, 12. 'My people 'are destroyed for lack of knowledge. My people ask counsel 'of their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them, for the 'spirit of whoredom' [idolatry] 'hath caused them to err, and 'they have gone a whoring from under their God.' Here we have a nation, sinful, laden with iniquity, forgetful of God, foolish, sottish, ignorant, idolatrous, and in danger of destruction; yet they are called the Lord's people; not because they were spiritually converted or pious; but because they had been consecrated to him by circumcision and baptism; and because there were many truly godly and devoted Israelites among them.

These are called 'The children of the Lord their God,'

(Deut. xiv. 1,) not because they were regenerated, but on the ground of their national adoption, having been initiated to him, and placed under his paternal care ; though many of them were prodigal, rebellious, and exposed to his highest indignation. In truth, it was this adoption which brought them under the special discipline of Jehovah, as the baptism of the New Testament congregations placed the members of them within the special surveillance and jurisdiction of the apostle. Amos iii. 2. ' You only have I known of all the families of the earth ; ' therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' In the passages just quoted from the epistle to the Corinthians, Paul only follows the example and style of the former economy. He designates them generally as saints, endowed with gifts and knowledge ; yet, he evidently did not view them *all* and individually as renewed by the Spirit of the Lord. He clearly implies that there were many sad exceptions among them. The expression, *Ecclesia tou Theou*, the congregation of God, 1 Cor. i. 1, does not necessarily convey the idea that all the people composing it were, in heart and life, the truly regenerated people of God. It might be designed to distinguish them, as professors of Christianity, from the idolaters around them, who were of the synagogue of Satan—professedly the Lord's people, as opposed to the children of their father the devil.

In further confirmation of this view of the case, the reader of the Scriptures will readily recognize the fact, that, when speaking of the people under the Old Testament economy, the sacred writers use general, rather than specific, terms, in describing the virtues and failings prevalent among them. In the best times there were many bad men and women in Israel ; and, in the worst, there were many good men and women in the land. But, when God is expressing his approval of the nation, he, with rare exceptions, says nothing of the ungodly ; and, when reproving the nation, the righteous are not particularly mentioned. The majority, or the party to be specially recognized, characterizes the whole. Passages, almost without number, might be cited, to sustain this view of the subject:—' When God heard this, he abhorred Israel. ' Israel would none of me. Israel doth not know, my people ' doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with ' iniquity. Israel is defiled. Israel hath cast off the thing ' that is good. All Israel forsook the law of the Lord.' The Jewish Christian writers employ the like mode of expression. A congregation is commended or corrected in general phraseology—the good are praised, while the bad are not excepted ;

and the bad are denounced, without literally exempting the good. So we speak of the sinful population of England, without specifying the righteous ; and of the godly inhabitants, without literally noticing the wicked. No person conversant with our modes of expression is misled by such language ; nor can the perspicuity of Scripture be impeached, for adopting such a style of speech. Mr. Tombes evidently viewed the subject in the same light :—‘All the house of Israel is put for ‘a great part, or the greater, or the most eminent, as it is ‘frequently. 1 Sam. vii. 3 ; Acts ii. 36 ; xiii. 24. As the whole ‘church is said to come together, when the most of them came ‘together....as a church of believers, from the greater, or ‘most eminent part, though the rest be neither actually nor ‘virtually believers.’ *Exam.* p. 38. This view of the matter readily explains many apparent difficulties in God’s word.

That Paul believed and taught the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in heart and life, most of our opponents believe. This may be taken for granted—as also his confidence that real Christians should never come into condemnation ; and that all who were begotten again from above, should be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. Nor is there, that we know of, a single passage in the Scriptures, which, fairly interpreted, would legitimately induce the conviction, in any enlightened mind, that water-baptism, administered even by the apostles themselves, was necessarily, ordinarily, or ever connected with the regeneration of a human spirit. Facts without number fully confirm our doctrine. Comparatively, few of the multitudes baptized by John appear to have ever been converted persons, any more than were all the Hebrews baptized in the Red Sea. Many of those, baptized by the disciples, before the death of Christ, went back, and walked no more with him ; and many, baptized by the apostles, after the Saviour’s ascension, gave painful proof that they were not spiritually converted.

It is plain, that *if the Corinthians had been taught, and believed, that none but professedly regenerated persons were baptized among them by the apostles, or that good evidence of spiritual regeneration were required of, and given by, all the candidates for this ceremony, previously to their undergoing it ; they would, at once, have discovered the fallacy of the writer’s argument, and the groundlessness of his fears and admonitions. They would have seen, at a glance, that Paul’s reference to the baptism, and to the subsequent sins and punishments, of the Hebrews, was totally inapplicable to their*

case. They might have rejoined somewhat in the following style:—‘The impiety of the unbelieving, disobedient, murdering, and idolatrous Hebrews, after their baptism, by God himself, may be readily accounted for. It is unquestionable that many, if not most, of them were ignorant, and unconverted, when they received this rite. They were not questioned as to their regeneration, nor did they profess to have experienced such a change. They were a people as much laden with iniquity as with affliction. But, according to your doctrine, Christian baptism now is a widely different matter. It is a test of sincerity; a token of our piety; a confession of our faith; a seal of our regeneration; and a proof of our spiritual union to Christ, our divine Head. We, of course, were not baptized till we believed, or professed our belief, with the heart unto salvation—till we had learned and embraced the doctrines, pledged ourselves to the duties, and enjoyed the privileges, of the gospel; and gave satisfactory proof that we had been created anew in Christ Jesus.

‘Now, as you, beloved Paul, do not believe in falling from saving and sanctifying grace, and encourage us to look to God for the preservation of our spiritual life; and as Peter says of the saints, that “they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times;” we believe your fears about us must be groundless and vain. At any rate, your reference to the case of the unconverted and ignorant Hebrews, baptized in the sea, is perfectly inappropriate; and your logic is quite inconclusive. You might as reasonably have said, that because confessedly, and even notoriously, unsanctified men have sinned awfully and suffered fearfully after their baptism, there is the same danger, that really enlightened, regenerated, and devout people, will transgress quite as badly, and be punished quite as dreadfully! You place us on a par with ‘Our Fathers’ who had just escaped from the slavery of Egypt; and who were never converted to God! You expect no more holiness from genuine and devout disciples of Christ, than from men, who were total strangers to the power of divine grace in their heart! We really thought better of spiritual conversion than you, by your arguments and inferences, now represent it.’

On the supposition, that Paul and his brethren taught, that none but spiritual believers of adult age ought to be baptized, and that they knowingly baptized no others; such a rejoinder would have been fair, natural, and, among shrewd and clever people, such as the Corinthians were, all but inevitable.



But supposing, that, on the other hand, it were well and generally understood, that conversion of heart, or spiritual regeneration by the Holy Ghost, was not necessarily required in candidates for Christian baptism, and that the baptized Corinthians had never been taught to believe, that, because they had undergone this rite, they were regarded as spiritual followers of Christ ; but had been received simply as disciples or learners in the school of Christianity, like the Hebrews in the school of the prophet Moses ; the apostle's argument appears consistent, harmless, and forcible ; and it was doubtless felt to be such in the Congregation at Corinth.

In arriving at the conclusion, that certain persons in the *ecclesia*, congregation, or church, at Corinth were not really and spiritually converted ; we have had recourse to the same kind of evidence which our opponents would regard as satisfactory in other analogous instances. We judge of the tree, not by its name, or its foliage, but by its fruits. We believe many of the Hebrews, baptized in the sea and subsequently unto Moses in the wilderness, were not regenerated, because they were not afterwards, as a whole, a truly godly people. We reason in like manner respecting multitudes baptized by John and the Saviour's disciples. Vast numbers of adults, as well as infants, baptized in our own day, evince, by the conduct they afterwards habitually display, that they never were regenerated by the divine Spirit. We are not deceived by their Christian designations, or their confederation with Christian assemblies. By their fruits we know them. This test of character is confessedly scriptural, and, when fairly applied, indubitably conclusive. What the Corinthians might have become subsequently to the appeal of the apostle is not the question ; but simply, what they actually were, in his judgment, at the time he wrote it ?

Surely, the divine marks of truly godly people were not upon *all* of them. Paul's description of the real children of God excluded many of them from the number of the elect, or, at least, of the then existing regenerated saints of God. His admonitions on the purity of true Christian fellowship, and spiritual communion, evince that they were not all of the genuine brotherhood ; and of this, at the time, he must have been fully and painfully conscious. And so must have been all the truly enlightened and pious people among them. As said elsewhere, we should not tolerate, in our select societies, for a single week, persons whose views and procedure agree with that of many in the congregation at Corinth ; and of

whose expulsion from their position, with one solitary exception, not a word of command or advice is given. While conducting themselves peaceably, they might be tolerated to attend our ministrations, and to hear our expositions and admonitions; but they would not be admitted to the bosom of any particular churches, either Baptist or Independent. 'They come unto thee 'as the people' [of God] 'cometh, and they sit before thee as 'thy people; and they hear thy words, but they will not do 'them.' There might be an association in public worship, but no communion of hearts, or real fellowship in love, holiness, and faith. A still more distinct view of this important point, in our controversy, will be seen in a following section.

SECTION EIGHTH.—*The prerequisites to the baptisms of Moses and of Christ were about the same in principle, nature, and degree.*—As we have just shown, the argument of the apostle implies that many of the Hebrews, baptized unto Moses, were in an unregenerated condition. Hence, we account for their subsequent sins and punishments. He is guarding the baptized Corinthians against similar transgressions, and consequent indignation. This could be consistently done only on the supposition, that, though they were baptized to one infinitely greater than Moses, they might not, in his opinion, be all regenerated, and so be securely placed beyond the possible vengeance of Heaven. His argument teaches this doctrine, or it is void of adaptation to his object, and of all force towards its accomplishment. They were not to take it as granted, that, because they had been baptized, they were savingly converted, and should, therefore, never come into condemnation. He is not here speaking of the personal doubts and fears often excited in the minds of the best of men, and of which Paul himself was occasionally the subject; but he is incidentally propounding a doctrine to others in accordance with his often reiterated views of the preservation and perseverance of the saints. 'Holiness,' says Mr. Pengelly, a leading Baptist minister, 'is nowhere required in God's word 'as a prerequisite to baptism.' p. 61. 'Wherefore let him that 'thinketh he standeth,' [safe and invulnerable, on the ground of his apostolical baptism], 'take heed lest he fall, under the 'same example of unbelief.'

The truth is, that as a qualification for baptism in the Red Sea, or in the Jordan, or in Jerusalem, personal conversion to God, newness of heart, saving faith, and holiness of life, were never deemed essential, nor ever required. A belief in

the heavenly mission of Moses, of John, and of Christ; an acquiescence in the truth of the primary doctrines propounded, and in the verity of the facts stated, by the divinely attested teachers; and a professed readiness to be further instructed and directed by them; were all the absolute prerequisites to Jewish or Christian adult baptism. Under God, Moses produced this faith in the Hebrews by his rod; John by his appearance and crying, 'in due time,' in the wilderness; and the apostles by the preaching of great facts and sublime doctrines, with signs following. Possibly, in each of these cases, some, if not many, real conversions took place, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the primary means here employed. But all those who simply believed the testimony given, and were made willing to undergo the ceremony, were immediately baptized; that is, they were, in effect, formally registered as the disciples of the Lord.

Now, surely, as before inferred, infants—to which, in simplicity, docility, and confidence, all must conform before entering the kingdom of God—were as morally and spiritually qualified for being dedicated to Christ as those unconverted sinners, who, had they professed to have been savingly renewed, would have only exposed, either their gross ignorance, or their impious hypocrisy; or, if represented as spiritual, by the persons who baptized them, the latter would have shockingly deluded their votaries, and have exposed the pure religion of Christ to the merited contempt of mankind. It is, indeed, worthy of notice, that, when some of the disciples of Christ had been contending among themselves, who should be the greatest in his supposed worldly kingdom, he said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. xviii. 3. That these disciples had been baptized, is doubted by few or none; and, yet, it appears, they were without that conversion which was the door into the real kingdom of heaven.

In the case of initiating or discipling the Hebrews unto Moses, we know that infants were as eligible for baptism as adults; and we are confident that the same rule will apply under the gospel economy; at least, we challenge any one to prove the contrary; and the contrary must be established before the claims of infants to ritual baptism can be righteously surrendered. The only passage which exhibits the slightest appearance of favouring the doctrine of spiritual conversion being requisite prior to personal baptism, and which text is

instinctively referred to and invariably pleaded by our brethren, in support of it, is Acts viii. 37:—‘thine heart, thou mayest’ be baptized. But, as before noticed, the most competent witnesses assure us, that this declaration is destitute of any sound canonical authority, and forms no part of the original Scriptures of God—being simply an interpolation of some blundering or presumptuous copyist. [*See Bloomfield’s Test. in loc.*] Besides, that some kind and degree of faith, knowledge, and change of mind, occasionally called repentance, conversion, confession of sin, with a professed or implied intention of submitting to the laws and rules of the system, to which they are to be initiated; must precede the baptism of adults, and of all independent individuals, no man in his senses ever doubted; as without, they would not comply with the ceremony. That the Eunuch believed Christ was the promised Messiah; and that, in compliance with Philip’s instruction, and, probably, his persuasion, he was baptized; are manifest.

The like may be assumed of all self-controlled men and women ever baptized by the apostles, and, from their day to the present, by the inferior ministers of Christ. But, that saving faith, or even a full and explicit profession of all divine truth, was demanded by John, or by our Lord’s apostles, before the rite could be administered to adults, is what we deny, and what our opponents have never yet established. The Baptist enjoined on his hearers the urgency of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance; but it was mostly after, and not before, they were baptized. *Comp.* Matt. iii. 8, 11, and Luke iii. 7, 11, 15: Though whether before or after, is immaterial to our leading argument. Indeed, unless he had delayed their baptism for months or even for years, till these fruits were forth-coming, which he certainly did not, his injunctions must have alluded to their conduct after, and not before, their baptism. Fruits meet for repentance do not, like Jonah’s gourd, grow in a night; nor are they like the morning cloud and the early dew, which appear an hour, and then vanish away. At all events, it could not have affected their baptism; for John had no opportunity of knowing but very few, if any, of them previously, and, most probably, never saw one in a thousand of them a second time.

His home was in the desert before he baptized them, and in the prison immediately after his brief official work was accomplished. Neither had he the prerogative of God himself, directly and immediately, to read the heart, and to learn what



was in man. He could not have instinctively discriminated between the different classes and characters that came to him, so as to have baptized some of them as godly, and refused the ordinances to others, as unregenerate. Certain persons rejected his counsel and baptism; but every willing attendant received the rite, whatever might have been his spiritual state before God. He left the investigation of men's spiritual condition to the judgment day, when Christ, with his fan in his hand, would thoroughly purge his floor. Matt. iii. 12. In respect of infants, the requirements made on adults, few and light as they were, the apostles dispensed with in baptism; as their fathers had dispensed with everything of the kind, prior to infant circumcision, purification, and other religious ceremonials, of which children were really proper subjects; and as the like is now dispensed with by our Baptist brethren, when they dedicate their babes to Jesus Christ.

That the preceding views, on this point, are not exclusively with the Pedobaptists, may be gathered from the statement of Mr. Stovel, already quoted. 'Having once been baptized, and entering into Christ; we are subject to his discipline, whatever the event may be. Whether we go forward to life, or turn back again unto death, the vow of God is upon us, and, in love or wrath, his love and honour must be vindicated.' Here we learn, that, through baptism, persons may enter into Christ, become, by profession, subject to his authority, and be laid under solemn vows to love and obey God; though, at the time, they may be destitute of vital and saving grace in their hearts—for such only, in the opinion of Mr. Stovel, and most of his Calvinistic brethren, will turn back again unto death, and incur the wrath of God. In still plainer terms, we learn that, unregenerated men have the capacity for being scripturally and duly baptized unto Christ, may be placed in the same relative position, towards the visible church of God, as the holiest person in the congregation of believers. If I understand the sense of the language Mr. Stovel employs, and I think I do, this is his own doctrine. Further, this gentleman, I presume, is propounding the ideas which he and his immersing friends generally entertain respecting the doctrines and doings of apostolic times. We may, therefore, on their own grounds, fairly conclude, that unregenerate individuals were legitimately baptized by the disciples of Christ, and then admitted to the privileges of discipleship; and which were subsequently forfeited only when the initiated

turned back again to the ways of death. In order to render this view of the question still more clear and conclusive, we shall offer several expository observations.

OBSERVATION I. *The question is, what did Christ and his apostles always require in all adults prior to baptizing them into the gospel economy?*—The inquiry is not, what attainments in knowledge and holiness may have been made by certain persons, whose baptisms are recorded in the New Testament? Some of them might have been, and probably were, so favoured, through reading the law and the prophets, or by hearing of, or seeing, the miracles wrought by the apostles, as to have understood much of the divine mind, before they had the opportunity, or felt the necessity, of being baptized, or openly consecrated, unto the Christian religion. And the blessing of God might have so immediately accompanied the first hearing of the gospel, that many of the people may have been really and spiritually converted to Christ, previous to their being initiated into the general body of Christian professors. For example, Paul was deeply convinced of sin, by the vision and voice of Christ, before Ananias baptized him. Lydia's heart and ears were opened to attend to divine truth, before she and her family were baptized by the apostles. The three thousand were pricked to the heart, and received the word, perhaps, gladly, before they were baptized, on the day of Pentecost. Cornelius, and those that were with him in the house, received the gift of the Holy Ghost before they were baptized. The Jailor at Philippi trembled and cried out for mercy before he and his children were baptized at midnight. All this, though constantly and triumphantly referred to, by the opponents of Infant Baptism, and the advocates of believers' baptism only, as being conclusively in their favour, is little to the purpose in the present investigation.

The question is not, what some or many persons may have attained to before they were baptized; but simply, what meetness the laws of baptism actually and always required, as indispensable, before any adult could be baptized by the apostles of Christ? It might have been a mere incidental circumstance, that certain individuals were convinced of sin, and even converted, before baptism. This is a case of frequent occurrence among existing Pedobaptists, who certainly do not deem spiritual regeneration essential, previously to water-baptism. The writer himself has baptized believing adults, and so have most of his brethren of the same denomination. These persons have been the grown-up children of Baptists,

or others, neglected in their infancy, by Pedobaptist parents. The historical details of particular baptisms are no certain guide for us, at least, as to the proper subjects of this ordinance; but the laws of the institution, as laid down by the Author of our holy religion, or referred to by him as a directory in this matter. Unless we had received a full account of every case of Christian baptism, administered by divinely directed men—which we have not, nor, probably, the thousandth part of them—we should be unable to draw any conclusion from them satisfactory to inquiring minds. Mr. Green says, ‘Exclusive of the baptism of Christ, and of the multitudes by John, and also of the disciples whom Jesus, as it was rumoured, made and baptized, John iv. 1; there are, I believe, *eleven* recorded instances of baptism in the New Testament.’ *Address*, p. 14. We must, therefore, appeal to the correct meaning of the commission on this head, as explained by previous instances under the law, by the conduct of John the Baptist, and by the early practice of Christians, as in a great measure explaining its terms; and, from all combined, make our own deductions.

We do not refer to the occasional conduct of the Israelites, even of the best of them, to ascertain the purport of the written institutions of Moses; but to his ordinances and statutes themselves; nor to the conduct of the early professors of the gospel, to find out the nature of Christianity, unless it be manifestly approved by the divine Head of the church, or by his inspired ambassadors; but directly to the laws and precepts of Heaven. Our opponents do not follow even the examples of the apostles themselves, in using the words of their baptismal rite. The former always employ the terms given in the commission, and baptize ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ But they can find no instance where this formulary is *said* to have been employed by the immediate followers of Christ, who baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. See Acts ii. 39; xix. 5. They and we properly follow the letter of the commission, and not the recorded language of the primitive baptizers. The above principle should never be lost sight of as a prime rule of biblical interpretation, in the case of Infant Baptism, and of every other question of grave importance in the Scriptures—understanding the mind of God from his laws; and appealing to the conduct of good men of primitive times for explanations only when those laws are to us obscure and uncertain. Such is not the case in this divine commission, which is our only

direct legislation in the New Testament on this subject; and which, undoubtedly, does not make conviction of sin, spiritual conversion, and saving faith in God, essential in any, much less in every, candidate for Christian baptism.

Of course, as previously intimated, the possession of vital religion disqualifies no unbaptized persons from receiving this ordinance—for, doubtlessly, many Jews were pious, converted, and holy, before John or Jesus entered on their gracious work, and were baptized by them or their attendants. Even Christ himself, though perfectly holy, underwent this ordinance at the hands of his harbinger. Cornelius received the baptism of water, after he had been manifestly baptized by the Holy Ghost. Nor do we, for a moment, believe that the apostles acted otherwise than according to the spirit and intent of their instructions. But, in this instance, we have the instructions themselves, and these, in conjunction with preceding practices, are plainer to us, than many of the narratives of the ceremony which the apostles administered. This arises from the fact, that only a few instances of practical compliance with them are recorded; nor is the account of these sufficiently plain and full, on many points, as required to place the question of their procedure beyond all difficulty.

I must here again advert to the fact, that the principal aim of the apostles, especially when publicly addressing the Jews and disputing with them—many, if not most, of whom probably had the divine and glorious doctrines and precepts of the Old Testament in their hands, or in their memories, if not in their hearts—was evidently to convince their audiences that the man called Jesus, who had been preaching in Jewry for some time, and who had been ultimately crucified under Pontius Pilate, at Jerusalem, was the Messiah spoken of by Moses and the prophets. No one can listen to their discourses without perceiving this to have been the case. Take an instance or two as examples. In the synagogues of the Jews at Thessalonica, ‘Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and ‘three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, ‘opening and alleging that Jesus whom he preached unto ‘them was Christ.’ Acts xvii. 2, 3. At Corinth, ‘he reasoned ‘in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews ‘that Jesus was Christ; and,’ [apparently without any further present instruction] ‘many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed ‘and were baptized.’ Acts xviii. 4, 5, 8. The Eunuch, probably a Jewish proselyte, having, at the utmost, confessed his hearty belief that ‘Jesus was the Christ,’ was immediately



baptized. The great point the first preachers aimed at, was to persuade the people, that the Messiah had actually come into the world, and had died for their salvation. This being done, baptism unto Christ was at once administered to them. And this perfectly accords with the commission. In fact, the apostle John makes the preaching of this great truth the test of a genuine and divinely directed ministry. ‘Hereby we know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof we have heard that it is come; and even now already is it in the world.’ 1 John iv. 2, 3.

The opponents of Infant Baptism, and of Adult Baptism, before actual and spiritual conversion to Christ, have dwelt with much emphasis on the case of Cornelius and his household, who received the Holy Spirit before being baptized by the apostle Peter. In reply to their objections, I will quote the remarks of Mr. Parsons:—‘If the Holy Ghost, falling on Cornelius, is a direct proof of his being converted *before* he was baptized, then the fact that the Holy Spirit did not fall upon the three thousand, nor upon the Samaritans, nor Ephesians, until *after* they were baptized, affords three direct proofs of baptism *before* conversion. How in the world could *Amator Veritatis* talk of the uniform practice of the apostles, when the precedent their conduct furnishes, and which he himself quotes, is three to one against his declaration? The case of Cornelius is a solitary one, and forms an exception to the general rule of apostolic proceeding; and the whole history shows that it was unusual for such a thing to take place, and that it occurred in this instance solely to overcome the prejudices of Peter. Nothing is more evident than that the apostle himself was astonished at beholding an event so uncommon. . . . We have one instance of a person receiving the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, and several instances of crowds being baptized before they received the Holy Spirit; yet, says the lover of truth,’ [and many echo his assertions,] ‘the *one* example is the infallible rule, and the *many* precedents are the exceptions!’ p. 81.

In reading the publications, and listening to the arguments, of some of our Baptist friends, it will be remarked, that they often make that a rule of ministration, which can be fairly deemed nothing more than an incident in its operations. The baptism of the Eunuch is dwelt on with special emphasis, as

if conveying all the information required to establish their views of the mode and subjects of this ordinance. But, in reality, it does neither. As to the subject, it proves too much for their purpose; for if the English text be valid—none but believers in *heart* should be baptized; and unless this be satisfactorily established, the candidate must not be dipped—they adduce a rule of action which they cannot always and safely apply. Then they recur to Mark xvi. 16; and lay remarkable stress on belief before baptism; forgetting that it is placed equally before salvation. Make this refer to water-baptism, and then the rule must be, that this rite, as well as faith, is essential to being saved—keeping all the unbaptized out of heaven! Recourse is then had to the baptism of our blessed Lord. But the peculiarities of the case render it unmeet for a rule in every other. People must be about thirty years of age, must be perfectly holy, and undergo this ceremony in a river, at least! The baptism of the 3000 on the day of Pentecost is adduced, as if that were a good rule for us now. But these were all said to have been males, probably from home, certainly Jews just proselyted to a belief in the fact that Jesus was the Christ—an analogous instance none of our opponents meet with once in a century. Reference is made to other instances, and adduced as grounds and rules of baptism. To a certain extent, they all may convey to us some light on the subject; but none of them, separately, can become a guide for our practice. We must view the cases as a whole; one explaining, confirming, or modifying another. To say, all must believe with the heart, because it is said the Eunuch did; or that faith must always go before baptism, as stated in Mark; or that the baptized must be adults and holy, because Christ was so when baptized in the Jordan; or that the Jews just proselyted and consecrated to Christianity on the day of Pentecost, are patterns to us; or, in a word, that any other case, noted in the New Testament, is alone a perfect directory to us in administering this ceremony, is to err most egregiously. The commission of our Lord, as variously explained and illustrated by the divers baptisms preceding or following it, is our warrant and guide in this interesting and important matter.

OBSERVATION II. *It does not affect the question before us, whether people were baptized unto Moses or unto Christ—to the servant or to the Son of God; for, in both cases, the baptism was, virtually and truly, to Jehovah himself.—The parties baptized unto Moses and unto Christ, whether adults*

or children, were essentially the same by nature and practice. The children who passed through the sea, were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, like their descendants in the days of John and Paul. The religion to which the Hebrews were consecrated, in the time of Moses, was the same, in all its leading properties, as the religion more fully unfolded by Christ, when he brought life and immortality more plainly to light, by the Gospel. But, perhaps, the original baptism, unto a less clearly developed religion, in the time of Moses, is elevated to an equality with that of after times, through being administered, not by man, but directly by God himself; an act never performed by Jesus Christ under the Gospel dispensation. The persons baptized unto Moses, 'were called 'to glorify God;' and nothing greater could be said of those baptized unto Christ. The responsible position in which the Hebrews were placed, cannot be exceeded by that in which Christian baptism places its professors. Blessedness resulted from obedience; and punishment was incurred by rebellion, in case the baptismal covenant of the Red Sea were broken. 'Having been baptized, entering into Christ, we are subject 'to his discipline, whatever the event may be. Whether we 'go forward to life, or turn back again unto death, the vow of 'God is upon us, and, in love or wrath, his love and honour 'must be vindicated.' For any differences the systems exhibit, the qualifications of the baptized, in their moral and religious capacities, might be on an equality. Certainly, no such discrepancies existed between them, as to demand vital piety in the one case, and to overlook it entirely in the other; or as to admit infants to this rite, by thousands, in the Red Sea, and to exclude every one of them in the days of Christ. God required as much piety in his people in the wilderness, as he did in Judea, after the Saviour's resurrection. And what he, so far, required, he probably obtained. The godly Christian may have had more light than the godly Hebrew; but he had no more devotion to the glory of the Lord, or love to his cause, than his Israelitish ancestor, baptized in the sea. Nor is it likely, that, according to the numbers baptized under both economies, that more drew back unto death, during the first forty years after the exodus from Egypt, than during the first forty years after John began to baptize and preach the doctrine of repentance, in the wilderness of Judea. Because the specific manifestations of piety may have differed under the law from those under the gospel, it does not follow, that the piety itself was not essentially the same. True religion, though the fruit

of one Spirit, develops itself in various forms in different individuals, and in every age of the church. While some who are baptized, both with water and the Spirit, remain comparatively obscure disciples all their days, others, baptized in the same way, perform numerous deeds of distinguished piety, with which their brethren do not intermeddle. Some are the hands, and some the feet—some the eyes and some the ears, in the baptized ecclesiastical body.

OBSERVATION III. *It must not be assumed that the same prerequisites for baptism are required in little children as in adults.*—We should recollect, what we have previously proved, that in some ceremonies the subjects are unconscious and passive, while in others they are intelligent and active. In the passover and the Lord's supper, the recipients, being adults, were active; they did something—indeed, the entire thing itself. They ate and drank the elements; and did not submit to have any thing done to them. While, in circumcision and baptism, the recipients, being for the most part children, were totally passive—they did not, in any sense, apply the element to themselves. This was done by the administrators. Mr. Tombes justly says, 'nor was circumcision itself the 'infant's duty, required by God of the infant; though it were 'a privilege, it was the parent's duty.' *Exer.* p. 165. Children, in many cases, are as capable of being acted upon as adults; and they may be equally blessed and obliged by the operation of an official agency. As any other human beings, born in sin, and needing regeneration; they may be rendered the medium of teaching these great doctrines as much as adults. In circumcision, father and child were alike passive and alike benefitted. In the baptismal act, adults, though consenting, are as passive as infants. They are acted upon; yet still they are bound, and may be blessed, by this sacred ordinance. The unconsciousness of the child does not disqualify it for being made the subject of instruction to others, or of good to itself.

Our Lord taught his disciples humility through the medium of a little child; and other children he blessed, by laying his hands on them. Even animals and inanimate matter were frequently employed to convey moral and spiritual instruction to man. The sacrifice which bled, and the tabernacle with its furniture, were used to convey lessons of religious wisdom. We know, that, in many ways, children, without their knowledge or consent, suffer great moral evils. Who would argue that because little children are unconscious of the value or the



precise nature of instruction, we are not to teach them? Or that, because the ancient Hebrew children did not comprehend or desire circumcision, they ought not, for lack of a proper capacity, to have been circumcised? Or that, because they did not understand the covenants of God, they should not have been present nor bound by them, as they unquestionably were at Sinai, and in other places? Or that, because they had not arrived at the years of discretion, they should not have been baptized in the Red Sea? Or that, because the children of our Baptist friends do not understand, nor consent to, their dedication to Christ, they should not be formally devoted to him?

Few persons would think of answering these questions negatively. Indeed, the assumptions they convey are so palpably true, that no thoughtful and candid person can ever seriously doubt their validity. And yet, a large amount of the argument brought against Infant Baptism is founded on the supposition, that they are all undoubtedly erroneous and absurd. If our opponents would be frank, and honestly concede the fallacy of their frequent thoughtless assertions—that infants ought not to be baptized, because they do not understand the nature of the rite—our controversy would, at least, be greatly circumscribed. To reply, that, by this admission, children might be admitted to the Lord's Supper, is fallacious, unless one might fairly contend, that if children may be initiated into the school of Christianity by baptism, for which they have a capacity; they should also be put into the pulpit to preach the gospel, for doing which, at present, they have not the ability!

OBSERVATION IV. *Personal piety is not essential to the reception of many religious benefits.*—After the preceding observations, on analogous topics, a defence of this assertion may seem superfluous. But we are constantly assailed by the declaration, that religion is a personal thing; that none but truly pious people are entitled to religious privileges; that the regenerate only should receive the emblem or sign of it; and that, therefore, as infants are not personally religious, or give no unequivocal evidence of having divine grace in their hearts; they are not entitled to the boon of a religious baptism. But will our scriptural and evangelical opponents deny, that our first spiritual blessings and saving impressions of divine truth, are the free gifts of God to unworthy, unconverted, and sinful men? Not only did Christ die for the ungodly; but when we were enemies to God by wicked works, he sent his

word and Spirit, and converted us to himself and to the practice and enjoyment of true holiness. Here we see, that previous personal religion is not essential to the reception and possession of the greatest benefits Christ now confers on mankind. To this wicked world, the Lord has given his word—a great blessing to us now, and every way; as were the oracles of God to the Hebrews, in ancient ages. He affords the worst of men the means of grace—a preached gospel, and the privilege of uniting in prayer and praise, in his holy temple. What numerous favours were conferred on the Israelites of old, irrespective of their personal religion; and in the Red Sea, it is evident, that grace in the heart was not prerequisite to receiving the blessings of baptism.

The case of circumcision, as stated by Mr. Noel, is fully corroborative of our views on this point. ‘As circumcision was intended to signify the circumcision of the heart, the renunciation of all sin (Rom. ii. 28, 29; Col. ii. 11; Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6), it was enjoined upon children and servants to show that God required this renunciation of sin by all his covenanted people. It was the token that they must be a holy people to obtain his blessing; (Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2, 21; xxvi. 19; xxviii. 9); but it involved no profession of piety, and was no sign of existing religious character.’ *Sub.* p. 173. Here, we gather, that great religious advantages may be obtained where there is no profession of piety, nor sign of an existing religious character. In a preceding page, the same writer says, ‘Infants can be saved without faith; because God can give them regeneration, which is equivalent to faith.’ *Ib.* p. 172. Hence, infants are capable of receiving the greatest blessing God has to communicate—equivalent to the faith which saves the soul of an adult. He adds, ‘But they’ [infants] ‘are unfit for baptism, because baptism is a profession of faith, and they are capable neither of making a profession of faith, nor of any thing which is equivalent to it.’ *Ib.* That a profession of faith, prior to baptism, is not required in Scripture, I have shown before; at least, that it was not required previous to baptism, any more than in the case of circumcision. It seems strange, that when regeneration places a child on an equality with a believing adult—its regeneration being equal to faith—and whose faith would entitle him to baptism—it should not also be baptized,—though in a similar relative position!

Equally strange are some other assertions of Mr. Noel, which I will here cite, as bearing on the point before us:—

'Circumcision, being the initiatory rite which introduced to the external privileges of the Abrahamic national covenant, was a token of the covenant, *i. e.* a sign that God required repentance and piety in those whom he promised to bless. But, when rightly received, it secured neither salvation, nor grace, nor pardon, nor any spiritual blessing beyond those which were external. It gave great privileges of an external kind, but nothing beyond it.' *Sub.* p. 181. Can Mr. Noel forget the purport of the commission, that the baptized were to be taught all things that Christ commanded his disciples? Was not this a great and inestimable blessing, though the means are external? And what beyond this is there, in reality, secured to the baptized adult? 'Baptism, on the other hand, when rightly received, being the true profession of a death unto sin, and a new life of faith and devotedness unto God through Christ by the Spirit, was the bath of regeneration, (Titus iii. 5;) was accompanied by the remission of sins, (Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16;) was the act of putting on the righteousness of Christ, (Gal. iv. 27;) and ended in salvation, 1 Peter iii. 21; Mark xvi. 16. The qualification for rites, with effects so different, could not be the same.' *Ib.* p. 182. But, according to the theory of the same writer, in other places, none but the true believer, the regenerated, and the holy, ever rightly receive this baptism! Consequently, all the privileges, made dependent on this ceremony, were enjoyed before-hand, and nothing additional can accrue from it, but the consciousness of having performed a religious duty—the immersed adult being just where he was before—unless he be admitted into the particular church of his brethren by it, which is not, in all cases, the fact! We say nothing of the thousands dipped every year, who have no saving faith at all.—Again,

'If baptism be the sign of regeneration, an unregenerate person ought not to be baptized. If the rite is a public manifestation of spiritual life, it should be withheld from those who afford no tokens of that life.' *Ib.* p. 112. This language is vague. If baptism were deemed a pledge, that the person is regenerated, we could understand him; but with the preceding statistics before him, he never could have intended that! Even 'circumcision was intended to signify the circumcision of the heart, the renunciation of all sin....the token that they must be a holy people to obtain his blessing.' Surely, if circumcision be a sign, or signify the circumcision of the heart, and might be administered to the children of the

Jews ; Mr Noel will have the goodness to prove, that baptism, which is but a sign of the same thing, may not be administered to the children of Christian professors—especially, after having truly told us, ‘Circumcision to the Lord’ is similar to ‘baptism to the Lord, both external acts betokening ‘the ‘same duty of sanctification and dedication to God.’ p. 14. The fact is, Mr. Noel, and his like-minded friends, view circumcision as indicating what a person must be hereafter, and baptism as expressive of what he is already. The former is an initiation to what is good, the latter a declaration that the good has been attained. Circumcision is for the sinner, baptism for the saint ! And yet, as just cited, we are told that circumcision to the Lord, is similar to baptism to the Lord, both betokening the same duty of sanctification and dedication to God ! Carson asks, ‘Are adult unbelievers to have the ‘figure of regeneration, which they have not experienced ?’—And replies, ‘I do not envy the conscience that can receive ‘this without qualms.’ p. 196. But, that this was the case in circumcision, is admitted by the writer himself, and by Mr. Noel also. And, pray, what qualms of conscience must our opponents feel, in giving the figure of regeneration to thousands, every year, who have not experienced the divine reality !

I will just add, that, on the Jordan, multitudes, whose piety must have been most questionable, enjoyed the benefit of baptism, or of being inducted to discipleship to the coming Saviour. Noel says :—‘All baptized unto Moses in the cloud ‘and in the sea . . . were marked to be the disciples of Moses, ‘by following him into the sea.’ p. 14. The majority of these were, unquestionably, not regenerated ; but a great blessing was conferred upon them by their dedication to Moses. Why, then, withhold the advantages of this consecrating ordinance from the young now, simply because they are not in the possession of personal piety ? With equal consistency might children be denied the blessing of religious instruction, or of an association with their parents in the worship of God. These advantages are not less spiritual and important than baptism, whether of infants or of adults. That there are certain institutions and blessings designed only for persons who are genuine disciples, or adult Christians in heart, as there are duties and privileges peculiar to parents, pastors, and people of wealth, no one questions ; but, that water-baptism, or the consecration of people to God, and the introduction of them to the seminary of Christianity, is intended



only for converted adults, I deny; and feel confident, that the most zealous and talented of our opponents cannot prove the reverse. Indeed, such converted proficient in the learning and experience of the gospel are the last to require such instruction, and, therefore, stand least in need of an introduction to the school of Christianity. If there be any class of people in this world, to whom water-baptism is less appropriate than to any other, they are the truly enlightened, pious, and proficient followers of Jesus Christ: and if there be any other class, to which it appears most adapted, it consists of little children. Our opponents, failing to establish the adverse doctrine, must surrender their favorite dogma—that the baptism of spiritual believers is the only valid baptism of the New Testament church. We may here readily perceive, why the strenuous advocates of adult or believers' baptism only, often labour so arduously, and even recklessly, to show that the subjects and designs of circumcision and baptism are so very dissimilar to each other.

OBSERVATION V. *A marked difference must necessarily have occurred between the first baptisms of the new dispensation and those that generally followed.*—Through a want of due reflection on this head, many persons have been led into serious mistakes on the baptismal question. Mr. Hall wisely observes, 'There is one general rule applicable to the subject, which is, that no matter of fact is entitled to be considered as an authoritative precedent, which necessarily arose out of existing circumstances, so that, in the then present state of things, it could not fail to have occurred.' p. 40. The difference above referred to displays itself in two ways. *First* in the great numbers baptized by John and Peter, at once, compared with the regular administration of the ordinance in after years. That vast multitudes were baptized unto Moses in the sea, by John on the Jordan, and by the apostles of Christ on the day of Pentecost, and very soon after, is clear, and affords full confirmation of our proposition. As far as we know, nothing like it was done in any following years, under the same economies, and among the same people. These plenary baptizings were brought about by miracles, by especial impressions, by providential combinations, or by the exertion of divine power over the minds of the masses, at those respective periods.

In the days of John and of Christ, previous to his death, there was a general and eager expectation of the promised Messiah. 'The kingdom of heaven,' or the gospel dispensation,

'suffered violence, and the violent took it by force.' 'The law and the prophets were until John; since that time, the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it.' In the earlier periods of the apostolic ministry, when there was no state or systematic persecution—occasional mob-uproars being the chief opposition the ministers of Christ had to contend with—the converts to Christianity were numerous; their adherence being probably based, in many cases, on the hope of personal and national advantages, or under the surprising and captivating powers exerted over their minds by the eloquence and miracles daily witnessed. 'Then, had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' Acts ix. 31. Afterwards, converts were made to their cause, slowly and gradually, in various places. But we have no authentic accounts of accessions, at any time, comparable with the numbers first baptized by John, the disciples, and the apostle Peter.

In speaking of the first baptisms by the apostles, Mr. Noel argues, 'If no testimonials of character were asked, and no delay of baptism suggested, neither of these were necessary. The converts embraced shame, persecution, loss, and hardship, when they received the gospel; none but earnest men were then likely to profess their reception of it; and neither ministers nor churches were authorized to demand any other qualifications in the converts, than the external indications of conversion—a hearty reception of the doctrine of Christ, and a cheerful subjection to his yoke.' *Sub.* p. 87, 88. That, from the first, there was much and violent opposition to the gospel, we admit. To profess it, was sometimes attended with very serious and painful sufferings and sacrifices. But these deterring outbursts were intermittent, and often much modified. It is hardly questionable by Mr. Noel himself, that, to become or continue protestants in England, in the days of bloody Queen Mary; or dissenters under the reigns of Charles II. and his successor James; exposed men to much greater losses and severer sufferings than the early Christians experienced under Herod Antipas, Herod Agrippa, or any of their immediate successors. And, yet, like Israel in Egypt, they grew and multiplied. Even in our own times, and in our own country, the trials of many poor nonconformists may vie with those felt by most of the earlier adherents to Christianity. On the other hand, the allurements to become disciples of Christ

at first—from the miracles they witnessed, and the anticipations they entertained—were exceedingly powerful; and, no doubt, operated mightily upon men who sought the loaves and fishes, or wanted places of trust and affluence, in the new theocracy which many expected to see established in the world. ‘Earnest men,’ would make great sacrifices to secure such prospective national and secular advantages. But earnestness or sincerity is no proof of regeneration. The sacred history proves that many strove to enter the kingdom, whose hearts were not renewed by divine grace. This the apostles knew as well as ourselves.

Mr. Noel concedes the fact, and which, indeed, no honest intelligent man will deny. He says, ‘no testimonials of character were asked, and no delay of baptism suggested.’ Even now, where these points are fully attended to by our opponents, nearly one-half they dip, at least, in some places, are ultimately found destitute of saving faith and the regeneration of their hearts. If none but those who gave a clear and satisfactory testimony of being subjects of saving grace had been enumerated, doubtless the numbers of baptized men and women, recorded in the Acts, would have been sadly diminished. Besides, if, as he admits, ‘no testimonials were asked, and no delay of baptism suggested;’ on what grounds are they so earnestly demanded by our opponents? For a practice, on which they lay such stress, and for which, they are constantly and eloquently contending, they have no *precedent* in the New Testament! The early ministers of religion took it for granted, that all who submitted to baptism were proper characters, though they could read no man’s heart. And though there might have been persecution in prospect, there was also, in their imaginations, many secular benefits before them! The apostles baptized unregenerated people without testimonials of regeneration; and our opponents do the same with false ones!

The *second* remarkable feature in the case is, that great numbers of men and women were baptized, as well as children. In the very nature of things, the adults would then be numerous, if not more so, than the children; as was the case in the great baptism in the Red Sea. The former had then never been formally initiated into this new economy. But that must be done—it being the appointed mode of discipleship for adults as well as for little ones. This baptism was administered to proselytes as soon as they were made willing to receive it, and on the spot. Parents from home, like nearly all the

three thousand on the day of Pentecost, were converted to Christianity, and baptized on the spot ; while, probably, most, if not all, of their wives and children were at a distance. Doubtless, many similar instances, on a smaller scale, took place during the apostolic times, (Acts. ii. 9, 11,) when the adult Hebrew males, from all parts of the world, were in the habit of going up to Jerusalem to attend the great national festivals, three times every year ; and which occasions, we may readily conclude, were always embraced to preach to them the great facts and truths of the gospel. Their wives and families would be baptized afterwards, perhaps, separately, at home, and without any public record of the occurrence being either made or preserved—for written registers of baptisms were then possibly unknown. The result of this would be, that more adults, and especially more men, were baptized by the apostles than women or children ; and the sacred historians would particularly notice the class which preponderated in numbers and existing social importance, as the subjects of this religious ceremonial. Thus the language of Scripture on this topic is reasonably accounted for.

But, after awhile, we hear no more of any extensive simultaneous baptisms of grown-up people in those localities. The children of baptized parents having been consecrated to the religion of Christ in infancy, would not be again required to undergo this rite a second time, on reaching man or womanhood. It is a singular circumstance, worthy of reiteration, that, from the day of Pentecost to the imprisonment of Paul at Rome, a period of thirty-three years, we never read of the baptism of any adult descendants of those parents who had themselves been baptized while their children were under their charge. This is an intimation that the little ones were baptized with their parents, or while they were young ; though the circumstance would not be deemed sufficiently important or novel among the Jews, fully conversant with proselyte baptism, to demand or obtain a distinct record in the annals of the churches. Had not this been the case, it is very likely we should have read of their baptism in after-life (as we do of the first adult converts to the gospel) on attaining full age, and being formally initiated, for the first time, into the general school or church of Christ.

This fact finds a parallel in the case of circumcision. When that rite was first instituted, some hundreds of adult males—and, perhaps, double the number of male infants—underwent this operation. Gen. xvii. 13. But, during the following



four hundred and fifty years, not a single adult Hebrew is said to have been circumcised. Indeed, we have good reasons for believing that no such case occurred during all that time, except through proselytism from heathenism. At the end of those years, this rite was performed on all the adult males, as well as on all the male children in Israel, because it had been discontinued forty years in the wilderness. Josh. v. 2-9. After that, for fifteen hundred years more, no male adult, of any of the chosen tribes, is ever mentioned as having been circumcised; and that, simply, because, like baptism, it was regularly administered to infants soon after their birth. The baptism of proselytes to Judaism, now admitted by the best-taught of our opponents, must have dated back far into the Hebrew commonwealth, and have been of no infrequent occurrence, especially in its more flourishing periods; yet, it is never once noticed in the writings of the sacred historians. The like remark will, I believe, hold true in reference to the circumcision of heathens into Hebrewism—no case of the kind being found in the Old Testament records from Moses to Christ, though every male proselyte was unquestionably circumcised, as well as baptized, and at the same time. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that the apostles are not known to have baptized any adults besides presently or immediately proselyted Jews or Gentiles. The baptism of a recognized nominal Christian adult, or of a regular attendant on the ministry of the gospel, for any considerable length of time, or who had been religiously trained up to adult age in Christian families, as is commonly practised among our opponents, is no where recorded in the New Testament; and, therefore, the assumption is, that the baptism of no such persons ever took place during the first age of the Christian economy.

It may not be uninteresting just to learn, that when a rite or institution had been once appointed by divine authority; the observance of it continued without remark or record by the divine historians for a very considerable time. Thus, the *Circumcision* of a Hebrew is not mentioned after Joshua v. 8, till Jer. ix. 25, being an interval of 840 years; though it must have taken place daily, if not hourly, during all that time. The *Sabbath* is not referred to from Deut. v. 15, till 2 Kings iv. 23, being a period of 560 years. The *Passover*, from Josh. v. 11, to the 2 Kings xxiii. 20, occupying a space of 820 years, is not once noticed, though it was a great annual festival of the Hebrews, throughout the land and the world, wherever the Jews resided. If it can be once ascertained

that a ceremony was divinely established, its continuance must be assumed, though no mention be made of its observance. It is, therefore, no valid objection to our doctrine, That Infant Baptism was continued from the time of Moses, till the death of John the apostle, to affirm we have no explicit statement of the fact during this interval, however protracted. Even the purifications under the law are seldom mentioned, though of perpetual reiteration. The cessation of them would be a subject for notice, and possibly of complaint; while their continuance, as a matter of course, would be passed over without chronicle or commendation. The stir made about the ordinary dipping, of our opponents, is a departure from the rule observed by the divine historians; while the quietness of dissenting Pedobaptists about consecrating their children to God, harmonizes with the silence which marks the writings of the inspired penmen.

To show, further, that the omission of express notice of Infant Baptism in the New Testament—its practice in previous ages being proved and admitted by our leading opponents—is of little force in this controversy, may be confirmed by a striking case of a somewhat parallel kind. It is well known to all conversant with the works of Josephus and other ancient and veritable ecclesiastical authors, that, long before the incarnation of Christ, there originated a body of religionists recognized by the name of *ESSENES*; that it became a large community, and existed during the time of Christ, and all through the apostolic age; and that its being and peculiarities must have been well known to the Saviour and to all the writers of the gospels and epistles. Yet this sect is not once mentioned by these inspired men, at least by name, nor are any, save remote and obscure hints, given of them or of their doings. Yet, will any reasonable man contend that they were not in existence, and openly observing their distinguishing rites in Judea, during the entire period of the apostolic ministry? And it would be equally unreasonable to argue, that Infant Baptism, which had existed long before the time of John, was not practised by him and others, because it is not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament.

*OBSERVATION VI. When we read of baptism in the New Testament, we must distinguish between that with water, and that with the Holy Ghost.*—We have only to notice the context of the passage in which it is mentioned, to discover which of these baptisms is intended. Failing to do so, we shall often find ourselves perplexed on the subject. For want of due

Discrimination here, many people fall into the Puseyite and Popish errors of baptismal regeneration and sacramental salvation. That the baptism with water is mentioned alone, is clear ; and so is the baptism of the Spirit. ‘I baptize you ‘with water unto repentance’—to the doctrine of repentance—‘he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’ Matt. iii. 11. Here are two baptisms perfectly distinguished. ‘For, by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether ‘we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free ; and ‘have been all made to drink into one Spirit.’ 1 Cor. xii. 13. Here is baptism with the Holy Ghost only :—‘Buried with ‘him in baptism, wherein, also, ye are risen with him, through ‘the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from ‘the dead.’ Col. ii. 12. Here are results ascribed to baptism, which can flow only from the operation of the Holy Spirit.—The like may be said, also, of the following passages :—‘Know ‘ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, ‘were baptized into his death? therefore, we are buried with ‘him by’ [or through] ‘baptism unto death ; that like as Christ ‘was raised up by the glory of the Father, so, even we should ‘walk in newness of life.’ Rom. vi. 3, 4.—‘He that believeth, ‘and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, ‘shall be damned.’ Mark xvi. 16.—‘Baptism doth now save ‘us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer ‘of a good conscience) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ 1 Pet. iii. 21.—‘For as many of you as have been baptized ‘into Christ, have put on Christ.’ Gal. iii. 27. Dr. Gale contends, ‘that in John iii. 3, the baptism of the Spirit only ‘is intended.’ p. 391. ‘*Kai*,’ says Carson, ‘often signifies ‘*even*.’ p. 69. Another writer thinks the passage is elliptical ; that, by being born of water, we enter the visible kingdom of God ; and that, by being born of the Spirit, we enter the invisible or spiritual kingdom. This interpretation certainly accords with the entire tenor of gospel doctrine, and the gloss does no violence to the concise style of speech generally employed by our Lord.

I am aware, that some of the above passages are capable of explanations in accordance with the idea of water-baptism, however administered. But, most readers will admit, that the literal sense, and the simple purport of the language, are indicative of effects, which can be produced only by the influence of the Spirit of God. To such senses we ought to adhere, unless obvious and urgent reasons compel us to adopt a different conclusion. It is well known, that Puseyites and

Papists derive their chief or sole argument, in support of baptismal regeneration, through believing and maintaining, that, in the above texts, water-baptism is intended; and that the saving results, ascribed to the rite, arise from the virtues of this ceremony, administered by priestly hands.

That most of these passages, understood of water-baptism only, present serious difficulties to our opponents, may be inferred, from their labouring to explain and apply them in support of their principles. They argue, that adults, being regenerated *before* they are immersed in water, may be said to receive the benefits, literally ascribed to this rite, at the time of its administration; or, that this rite is a recognition of their being born of the Holy Spirit. But this does not comport with the language of the inspired writers, who ascribe union to Christ, interest in his death, rising to newness of life, being saved from destruction, and putting on Christ, to this act or operation, as taking place in it, or, as immediately consequent on it. In the celebrated text just cited, Rom. vi. 3, 4; and on which our opponents lay such extraordinary stress, in defence of dipping in baptism; the result evidently proves, that it refers exclusively to the work of the Spirit, in the conversion of the soul; for the baptized are said to rise to newness of life, in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, the old man being crucified, the body of sin being destroyed, and the individual no longer serving sin. He that can ascribe such results, in every or in any case, to water-baptism, is not far from the kingdom of—the Pope!

The following citation from Lord Congleton's recent Tract, entitled, 'What is the Use of Baptism?' may be considered as expository of the views which the advocates of believers' baptism take of the texts before quoted. The italics and capitals are his own. 'Thus far the passages of Scripture that' [it] 'was proposed to examine. And we are brought to this conclusion, that while baptism is *not* the means whereby a person is born of the Holy Ghost, yet is it *very much more* than a mere *sign*. Baptism is a visible act, whereby *saving* benefits, already possessed by the *believer*, according to the truth of God's promises, whether he be conscious of the fact or not, are *again* bestowed upon him, as *by a visible act*, for his comfort and strength. *Baptism is a visible act whereby sinners that repent and believe do VISIBLY receive the remission of their sins.* Or, more fully, *baptism is a visible act, whereby sinners, that repent and believe, are VISIBLY associated with Christ in His death, burial, and*



*'resurrection, and thus are justified, sanctified in Him, and made the children of God, and united to one another, in Him....* Baptism, according to this view of it, is an Ordinance whereby *the believer* is put into immediate *conscious* possession of the forgiveness of his sins. It may be, that he is already *'conscious* that he is forgiven; if so, this consciousness will *'be confirmed and strengthened.'* p. 14, 15.

According to this interpretation of the above texts, men are not regenerated by baptism, but they have a pledge that they were renewed before, and may, thenceforward, safely calculate on being the real people of God; their conscience now bearing them this delightful testimony! The reader will easily call to mind several citations from the works of Mr. Noel, Carson, Stovel, and others, in which the like opinion is broached and advocated. At least, if such be not the idea they labour to inculcate, they are totally meaningless, and utterly fail to promote the object the writers are aiming to advance. Yet, how much less delusive than Puseyism is such a notion, let the reader judge! How disastrously must such opinions operate on the minds of the thousands of men and women who, without saving grace, but on a bare profession of faith, are baptized by our opponents every year! Mr. Green asks, 'What will attest the entireness of assent by which I have become Christ's? The very day when this inquiry is met will witness his declaring, in the sight of all, by this expressive rite, "I am the Lord's alone."' p. 16. Carson argues, 'Does Mr. Ewing believe, that when a man believes the gospel, his infants, and all the unbelievers, of his house, receive remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost? If not, there is no ground to give them that baptism that implies both remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost?' p. 203.

Mr. Stovel evidently teaches that 'every baptized person,' baptized with water, 'may be designated a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' *Dis.* p. 7. The same writer says, 'Baptism is not a symbol, showing the necessity of faith and repentance in the baptized'....but that, 'through the ministration of divine mercy, they are willing to act under that authority, and to commit their everlasting interests to that event.' *Ib.* p. 196. Or, in effect, it is saying or showing, that they are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and that all believers are so to regard them. In his Woolwich Lectures, he is more explicit, or, certainly, more unguarded. 'There are two agencies employed in the new birth; the water and the Spirit. By these a converted' [or, rather,

an unconverted] ‘man begins life anew, not by water without ‘the Spirit, nor by the Spirit without the water, but by the ‘water and the Spirit. *Lect.* iii. p. 41. ‘After baptism, he is ‘then to be registered as a child’ [of God], ‘and trusted as a ‘brother, and held responsible as one devoted to God.’ *Ib.* p. 42. Wherein this doctrine differs from Puseyism, perhaps Mr. Stovel can tell us!

A large and growing body of the Baptists, in America, are even more explicit than Messrs. Noel and Stovel on this head, and fully state what the language of those gentlemen implies, and to which, in feeling and effect, it practically leads. They admit to immersion, ‘every one who sincerely believes the ‘testimony which God gave of Jesus of Nazareth, saying, ‘“This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I delight;” or, in ‘other words, believes what the evangelists and apostles have ‘testified concerning him, from his conception to his coronation in heaven as Lord of All, and who is’ [professedly] ‘willing to obey him in every thing, they regard as a proper ‘subject of immersion, and no one else.’ Hence, every person admitting and avowing his belief in Christianity, or every nominal adherent of gospel truth, regenerated or not, is qualified for this immersion. The results of their baptizings are stated by one of their own ministers; and, I believe, they are not disputed by any of his brethren. ‘It was the *unity* ‘of the church which first struck the attention: the subsequent submission to immersion is only one example, among ‘others, of that progression which consistency with their own ‘principles required. Thus, it was not till about ten years ‘after this, that the *definite object of immersion* was fully ‘understood, when it was recognized as the *remitting ordinance* of the gospel, or the appointed means through which ‘the penitent sinner obtained an assurance of that pardon, or ‘remission of sins, procured for him by the suffering and death ‘of Christ. Nor was it until a still later period, that the ‘doctrine was *practically applied*, in calling upon believing ‘penitents to be baptized for the purpose specified. This view ‘of baptism gave great importance to the institution, and has ‘become one of the prominent features of this reformation.’—*Faiths of the World.*

Though all our opponents do not go to the same lengths, as to the efficacy of immersion; and though some of them often forcibly declare, that it is merely a ceremony which does not, in the least measure, save the soul; yet, they frequently lay such stress on the reception of this rite, as an

*act of obedience* to the plain and unmistakable will of Christ; that the persons who refuse to submit to it must be viewed as resisting and rebelling against the truth; and whose conversion and piety are matters of fearful doubt. With this argument, they induce numbers, every year, to go under the water. The result, on many minds, is the same as if assured, they could not be truly and savingly religious, without being dipped in the sacred waters of their baptistry; and, as if the reception of such a rite gave an assurance of their regeneration and final salvation! The truth is, you must make this baptism a mere initiatory rite to external religious privileges and duties, and a simple teaching of the doctrine of the new birth; or you must regard it as the certain and constant concomitant of the receiving and saving work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, you cannot make it any thing beyond a symbol or a dedication to God, without viewing it as a regeneration of the soul—the latter being the gracious work of the Spirit, and the former the mere symbolical application of water. Depart from this rule, and you are in great danger of fatally misleading and injuring the souls of men.

It may be worth while to take another instance, in order to show the difficulties our opponents have to surmount, while interpreting passages expressing the divine baptism of the Holy Ghost, and applying them to baptism with water, in order to oppose the baptism of infants. Noel, on Gal. iii. 26, 27, says, ‘The Galatians were the children of God by faith, because all baptized persons have put on Christ, *i.e.* are justified and adopted. . . . If we assume that baptism is an act of faith, then the argument is sound; “ye are the children of God by faith; because all who are baptized in faith, put on Christ, and those who put on Christ, are children of God; as, then, you have been baptized by faith, you have put on Christ by faith, and have become the children of God by faith.” Hence, baptism is an act of faith according to the text; and believers alone ought, therefore, to be baptized.’ *Sub.* p. 108, 109. If I understand this crudely-expressed syllogistic passage, the writer means, that all who believe, and are baptized with water, are the children of God—are justified and adopted—have put on Christ—and are safe for heaven. Thus, all who are baptized, not only put on the profession of the doctrines and duties of religion, but, are savingly united to Christ. But, in the latter verse, the apostle explains how the Galatians became thus safe, justified, and adopted. They were all ‘the children of God by faith,’

because all baptized persons have 'put on Christ.' They were made the children of God by renovation, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, before they possessed the faith of justification and adoption; and because of this baptism, they were inducted into a divine relationship to the blessed Redeemer. If this be effected by water-baptism, then Pusey and the Papist are not far wrong; water-baptism saves everlastingly. It is not the mere recognition of persons as already believers, but the actual cause of saving faith!

It may be noted, that Paul, in writing to the Romans, inscribes his epistle, 'To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints,' [*to be* is not in the original,] 'grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ'—adding, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.' chap. i. 7, 8. Here we have a people, at the least, as holy as the congregations in Galatia or Corinth; and of whose baptism no person, I presume, entertains the smallest doubt. Yet, he admonishes them to '*put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,*' ch. xiii. 14; meaning, 'to take him as a pattern and guide, to imitate his example, to obey his precepts, to become like him,' &c. *Barnes*.—This was said to the Romans, probably, some years after their baptism—in which rite that object had not been really or fully accomplished. They are exhorted to do it, for the first time, or to do it again, or to do it better. Therefore, Christ may be put on, without undergoing the ceremony of baptism, with or in water. Hence, '*to put him on,*' necessarily conveys nothing more than to make a profession of faith, or to assume an obligation to regard Christ as a pattern, teacher, and Saviour. It does not certainly vouch for the regeneration or saving faith of the subjects baptized. In the letter to the Galatians, if water-baptism, and not that of the Spirit, be intended, the apostle means, that his readers had embraced the Christian religion, and had become identified with the Jews and the Greeks who professed to be the disciples of Christ. The stress laid on the passage, and the inference drawn from it, by Mr. Noel, are manifestly unwarranted.

Water-baptism is but a type of the baptism of the Spirit, as the circumcision of the flesh was a type of the circumcision of the heart; or, as the Passover and the Lord's Supper were types of the sacrifice of Christ, and of our need of faith in him. Water-baptism is introductory to the privileges and



duties of discipleship in the school of Christ; while that of the Holy Spirit meetens the soul for the communion of saints at the Lord's Table. The former admits to the outer court of the visible assembly or congregation of professors; the latter into the holy place, as priests unto God and the Lamb, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The baptism of the Spirit impresses and renovates the soul, really sanctifies the heart, consecrates it to God, induces holiness of life, zeal for the glory of God; and so, in process of time, prepares it for the inheritance of the saints in light. This water-baptism cannot do; any more than the blood of bulls or of goats, or the ashes of an heifer, could formerly take away sin. Though water were applied to a person, in the most approved forms, by the holiest hands, it could afford but a delusive consciousness that he was justified, sanctified in Christ, and made a child of God.

The distinction made by John, between his baptism and that of the Messiah is most important. Christ never personally baptized with water; and the disciples, though they gave the sign, never baptized with the Holy Ghost. To do the latter is a divine prerogative. Ministers may exhibit the token; but Christ only can give the substance—just as they may sow the seed, while he only can give the increase. The first is introductory to visible advantages here; the latter graciously prepares the soul for glory hereafter. The baptism of the Spirit is necessary for eternal life; and no one can ascend to heaven, unless he be born from above. John probably baptized the twelve disciples at the Jordan; but Christ baptized eleven of them with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, on the day of Pentecost. Peter baptized Cornelius and his family with water; Christ baptized them visibly with the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, acts so essentially different in their results must not be confounded, in their operations; nor must we combine them, as if they were necessarily inseparable. That God baptizes with the Holy Spirit those who may never be baptized with water, we may gather from the fact of the many holy people in the Society of Friends, and the many converted persons among our opponents, who have never undergone this outward rite before their death. And that many are baptized with water, who have never been baptized with the Spirit, the numbers of ultimately ungodly persons consecrated to God in infancy by Pedobaptists, and upon a bare profession of faith, in adult age, by the Baptists, we have

numerous and painful testimonies. The baptisms of Scripture are to be distinguished on the foregoing plain and important principles. For want of doing so, some persons, on reading about the saving, and renovating effects of baptism, have erroneously concluded that it was water-baptism the writers always referred to. Hence, they have been led into, or been confirmed in, the dangerous notion, that true holiness must have been effected by it, or that, at least, it must have preceded the rite of water-baptism. Whereas, it was the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, entirely independent of the outward ceremony.

To show the distinction I am contending for is of grave importance in this discussion, I may further observe, That while many people are baptized with water who are not baptized with the Holy Ghost; still many more are baptized with the Holy Ghost who are not baptized with water. I believe that two points will be granted by our opponents. *First*, that no person can enter the kingdom of heaven above, who has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit—the act designated also, being born of the Spirit, regenerated, made new creatures through Christ Jesus, and the like. And, *secondly*, that all children, dying in infancy, in every age and in every part of the world, go to heaven; and that all the pious and spiritually converted adults, who have not been baptized with water, in any form, also go to that world of glory. Then, the conclusion is inevitable, that, where the ministers of Christ baptize one individual with water, God baptizes, at least, a thousand by his Spirit, and makes them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light—a glorious consideration, calculated to inspire the believer's soul with thanks to their benevolent Friend in heaven. The case is analogous to that of partaking of an interest in Christ's glorious sacrifice, without partaking of the material elements appointed to set forth our act of faith, and adherence to him, at the Lord's table. Water-baptism and the Eucharist are appointed ordinances, which all believers ought personally to observe or relatively to promote; but the neglect of them, especially through ignorance, incapacity, or lack of opportunity, assuredly, will exclude none from the kingdom of heaven.

I am here reminded of a conversation with a clever Baptist minister, on the subject of Infant Baptism. As the notion of my good brother is, probably, entertained by many of our opponents, I will just give the substance of the discussion. Among other statements offered in defence of our service, it

was urged, 'That as children, dying in infancy, went to heaven, 'they must have been spiritually regenerated, or, in other terms, must have been baptized with the Holy Ghost; and 'it was thence inferred, that if little ones had the capacity of 'undergoing this inward baptism, they could not be lacking 'a capacity for receiving the outward symbol of it—baptism 'with water.' The reply to this reasoning was, 'That children, 'dying in infancy, did not require regeneration, or the baptism 'of the Spirit, being sufficiently holy, or innocent, by nature, 'to enter heaven without it.' Surprised at this strange response, from so devout and acute a divine, I asked him, if a 'clean thing 'could come out of an unclean; 'if men were not all 'born in 'sin and shapen in iniquity; 'if the seeds and elements of the adult sinner were not in the babe, just as the savage principles of the tiger were in the whelp? and if so, were the souls of such unrenowned children meet for glory? He conceded my premises, that, by nature, we were corrupt; but contended, that, though some improvement in the nature of children was needed; yet, that regeneration, which is symbolized by water-baptism, was not requisite. This, I remarked, was admitting the doctrine, but only objecting to the term.

He was further reminded, that if children were naturally pure and spiritually holy; and if far more little ones went to glory than penitent, pardoned, and sanctified men and women; the consequence must be, that a vast majority of the spirits translated from this earth, and now surrounding the throne of God, could not heartily join in the song of Moses and the Lamb; for, having been neither sinners nor sinful, they could not have been redeemed by Jesus Christ; and never having been unholy, nor unclean, could never have been purified, nor made meet for heaven, by the Spirit of God! My friend evidently felt the force of this inference; but made no reply. This little occurrence is worthy of notice only as showing what even clever and good men will advance when resolved, at all events, to sustain a favorite practice, or to oppose a system they have long been accustomed to condemn.

SECTION NINTH.—*The distinguished titles given to the baptized, do not affect our conclusions.*—In this controversy a sense is often attached to the words, Believer, Disciple, Convert, Christian, &c., calculated to induce very serious theological mistakes. On reading these terms in the New Testament, many persons associate with them senses which they do not always, or, perhaps, often, intentionally

express. When they read, that disciples or believers were baptized, or that people were converted and became Christians, they instantly conclude, that, because they are so designated, they must have been spiritually regenerated, and, thereby, become holy followers of Jesus Christ. This does not necessarily follow. Mr. Noel justly observes, that 'words 'have a lower or loftier sense in different connexions.' Mr. Tombes also truly remarks, 'Not etymology, but use, must expound words.' p. 146. Our opponents must prove their assumption, that these terms are employed always and only to characterize truly pious, and renewed people, before they can effectively employ them, or the supposed meaning of them, against the doctrine of Infant Baptism. If they are found to carry a lower sense, if they convey the idea of characters not Christians indeed and in truth; then it will be seen, that there are, at least, two classes of people bearing the same appellations—the one truly genuine, and the other merely nominal, followers of Christ.

That there were many persons called Believers, Disciples, Converts, and Christians, who were born of God, and lived to glorify him, and to bless the world, none but the grossest infidel will deny. But, that there were many others, spoken of in similar terms, who were not divinely renewed and influenced, is equally indubitable. As there were 'Israelites 'indeed,' so there were Israelites only in name. All were not Israel that were of Israel. There were Jews inwardly, and there were Jews only 'outwardly after the flesh.' There were believers in Christianity, as simply distinguished from Jews and heathens; and there were those that believed with the heart unto salvation, and whose faith overcame the world. Dr. Urwick, referring to John viii. 30-32, says, 'From these 'verses it is evident, that our Lord made a difference between 'disciples in *form*, and disciples *indeed*—that there was a 'faith possessed which made disciples in *form*, when there 'was not the knowledge necessary to make disciples *indeed*.'

In the Old Testament phraseology, as we have already seen, and, as may be further observed in the sequel, terms are used in a lower and a loftier sense, as well as in the New; and, generally, in almost every other verbal composition. There was the true *Israel* and the false; there was the true *prophet* and the false prophet; there were *children* of God that were good, and others called the children of God that were bad; his *people* that he loved, and his people that he despised; his *servants* whom he praised, and his servants whom he



condemned. The Lord had holy *priests*, and very indifferent ones. It is only by the connexion, in which these terms and titles, are found, that we can determine whether the good or the bad prophet, priest, person, servant, or child, is meant by them. These designations, in one connexion, express the highest and holiest characters the Hebrews could sustain; and, in another, they point out very unworthy, and, sometimes, very wicked, men. They were all circumcised, all were baptized, and some of them anointed to office; and, yet, they were as different from each other—as a nominal believer differs from a believer with the heart unto salvation; as a disciple indeed differs from a disciple without divine grace; as a mere notional convert to Christianity differs from a spiritual convert to Christ; and as a Christian only in name differs from a Christian in feeling and life. None but the most unreflecting, when reading in the Old Testament of Israelites, prophets, priests, children, people, and servants, would infer that they must have been all godly, devout, sincere, and obedient Hebrews. And equally ill-furnished must that mind be now, which, on finding the terms, believers, disciples, converts, and Christians, in the New Testament, jumps to the conclusion, that all, bearing these titles, are truly regenerated souls! We will now briefly examine these terms, and in the order in which we have placed them. This inquiry is of considerable moment in the present controversy.

I. BELIEVERS.—With regard to this term, it may be noticed, that some ‘believed for a while’ only. Luke viii. 13. Here faith and regeneration are separable. Simon Magus believed and was baptized. Acts viii. 13. Here belief and impiety are united. ‘Among the chief rulers also many ‘believed on him, but, because of the Pharisees, they did not ‘confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ‘for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of ‘God.’ John xii. 42, 43. Surely, this was not saving faith! The devils believe, and tremble too. James ii. 19. But, Satan, though a believer, cannot love God or his saints. Paul supposes men may believe in vain. 1 Cor. xv. 2. The Ephesians believed before they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Eph. i. 3. The belief of many and of most was, simply, that Christ came from God, John xvi. 30; that God did send him into the world, *Ib.* xvii. 21; and that the Saviour died and rose again. 1 Thes. iv. 14. When Paul speaks of a faith unfeigned, he implies that there is a faith of mere pretension. 1 Tim. i. 5. Others had a faith that was readily

overthrown; this was not the faith of God's elect. *Ib.* ii. 8. Some made shipwreck of faith. 1 Tim. i. 19. This, surely, was not a faith that saves the soul. John the Baptist purified no grown-up people who were not believers in the doctrines he proclaimed, or in the mission he came to fulfil; had it been otherwise, they would, like the Pharisees and lawyers, have rejected the counsel of God, and not been baptized by him. The adults, baptized by our Lord's disciples, in the early part of his ministry, must have been believers, or they would not have submitted to receive this rite at their hands. As we have previously shown, the great object of the first preachers of the gospel was to induce people to believe in the Saviour's Messiahship. This, surely, might have existed then as now, where saving faith had not been obtained.

The twelve disciples had very little faith for a good while after they became the professed followers of Christ. When he turned water into wine, 'then they believed on him;' implying that, previously, they had more doubts than faith. At a later period, he permitted Lazarus to die, to the intent that, by raising him from the dead, they might believe; indicating that, hitherto, they were not without occasional doubts concerning his Messiahship. And even after his resurrection, and before the day of Pentecost, he upbraided them as 'fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken concerning him.' It is evident, that Christ had many disciples who did not believe with their heart; for they totally abandoned him, John vi. 66. And we learn that there were believers who never became his disciples, nor were baptized unto him. John xii. 42, 43. Indeed, some were said to have believed on him whom he designated the children of their father the devil, and who did the deeds of their father. John viii. 31, 41. Hence, it cannot be doubted, that the word Believer does not necessarily and always mean a truly spiritual and savingly converted person. When we read of believers being baptized, the terms give us no assurance that the subjects were genuine followers of Christ. If we take in the numbers baptized by John and by our Lord's more immediate ministers, we may safely say, that, as far as the narratives enable us to judge, and that most favourably, not one in a hundred was a true, intelligent, spiritual believer, when receiving this rite.

The word believer is expressive of relationship as well as of personal knowledge and confidence; so that, if parents are set down as believers, their children are virtually regarded as

believers also. A Jew is a believer in Moses; hence, his children are all Jews; though they have never read or seen the Old Testament writings. A Mahomedan is a believer in the Koran, and all his children are Mahomedans also, in the usual style of addressing them. A Baptist is a believer in adult immersion, and all his children are designated Baptists also, though many of them are babies; and a Baptist congregation is distinguished by these terms, though there may be a hundred little ones present. Mr. Noel says, 'The Jewish baptism was intended only for believers in Moses;' if so, then their children were regarded as believers also, for certainly thousands of them were baptized in the sea, in the wilderness, and when proselyted from heathenism. He adds, that 'Christian baptism is intended for none but believers in Christ.' But since the children of Christians are as really believers in Christ, as the children of Jews were believers in Moses, there is perfect consistency in baptizing them in the same way! Christ says, of the little children he took in his arms, that they 'believed' in him. As their parents probably were called believers, the children were regarded as being believers also—though here their personal credence of what Christ said to them is the more probable import of his declaration concerning them.

Mr. Rees observes, 'Now because the word *believer* is, 'by the propagation of the gospel, become a sort of an 'ambiguous term, it may be necessary to explain this matter 'a little. A believer, at the first propagation of the gospel, 'was one who acknowledged one true God, and professed 'faith in the Messiah, in opposition to an infidel, *i. e.* an 'idolater; but a believer in our day is one who has the faith 'of the operation of God, or the faith of God's elect, in 'contradistinction to a nominal Christian, who (strictly speaking) has only a notional faith in the existence of the true 'God and of Christ.' p. 239. This passage contains an important truth; and, though it requires a cautious application, is calculated to divest our opponents of one of the principal arguments usually employed by them against our system, and in support of the baptism of only truly regenerated believers. The question here is, not in what sense the word may be employed by our opponents now, but its current or occasional use by the apostles. That, at least, frequently, was descriptive 'of persons 'who acknowledged One True God, and professed 'faith in the Messiah, in opposition to an infidel or idolater,' without any saving faith in Christ.

Mr. Hall remarks, 'The profession demanded in the baptism of John was nothing more than a solemn recognition of the great article of the Jewish faith, the appearance of the Messiah, accompanied, indeed, with this additional circumstance, that it was nigh at hand. The faith required by the apostles includes a persuasion of all the miraculous facts which they attested, comprehending the preternatural conception, the deity, incarnation, and atonement, the miracles, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In the one was contained the general expectation of the speedy appearance of an illustrious person under the character of the Messiah; in the other, an explicit declaration that Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and death are recorded in the evangelists, was the identical person.' p. 17. That this, in substance, was the utmost included in the faith required of adults, prior to their baptism, either by John or Peter, we may safely conclude, and what we have repeatedly asserted before. But the statement contains not a word as to the possession of spiritual regeneration, the sanctification of the soul, or the manifestations of practical godliness. A credence and admission of certain great doctrines and facts were all the apostles ever regarded as requisite to adult baptism.—Carson says, 'In mode and subjects John's baptism was perfectly coincident with Christ's.' p. 175. 'John's baptism did not serve' [as a substitute] 'for Christ's baptism.' p. 177. 'There is no doubt but John's baptism and Christ's were equally extensive.' p. 178. These concise quotations corroborate certain previous assumptions respecting the accordance of John's baptism and that of Jesus Christ; a point of some importance in our investigations.

Mr. Stovel says, 'That belief which leadeth not to repentance, is no belief at all. Until a man becomes a believer in this vital sense, he is to be numbered with the ranks of the adversary; and if an enemy found disguised within the lines, at a time of war, by the military law, he is shot, not nourished as a brother, and trusted as a friend.' *Reg. Lect.* iii. p. 38. Our author's meaning is, that none should be called believers who are not so in heart; and that all those, baptized by the apostles or their assistants, were of this character. I see no drift in his language, if this be not the impression he seeks to convey to the mind of his readers. But, according to the various concessions and the ample statistics already given, the Baptists dip, and introduce to their inner churches, persons who are not believers at all—seeing, according to Mr. Stovel, there are no believers except truly Christian penitents. He



does not here allow of a mere nominal belief, as available for admission to the baptistry, and to the communion of saints: for, according to him, there is no believer who is not such in a vital and saving sense! Does he not assume, that no distinction is made in Scripture between such a belief as Simon Magus professed, and that of the apostle Paul! between the credence of the understanding, and the holy confidence of the heart! Would he persuade his congregation that there was not a nominal, or a mere professional, belief, as well as a believing to the saving of the soul? Good and intelligent men must be hard driven, before they would venture on such rash and dangerous declarations, in order to oppose the baptism of infants! Does he reckon all of his hearers, whose faith has not led them to repentance unto life, and who are not believers in a saving sense, as adversaries, or as enemies in disguise, within his denominational lines; and who, if not shot, should neither be nourished as brethren, nor trusted as friends!

In another passage, he says, 'The repentance which John required, must have been based on evangelical faith, and 'his baptism believers' baptism....John did require faith, 'and the faith which he required, was no superficial act of the 'intellect merely, but one which ruled the heart and formed 'the character. *Dis.* p. 117. This is all very admirable. But, did he in many, or in any, known instances, succeed in getting it? Did he require it as essential to baptism; and refuse to administer this rite to all that did not prove they possessed it? God requires all men, every where, to repent; but do they, notwithstanding, universally do it? Mr. Stovel requires all his congregation to believe with the heart, to be truly sorry for their sins, and fully to obey the gospel, in order to be saved; indeed, he dare do no less. But are the responses of his people's hearts and lives answerable to his requisitions? John, if he required faith unto salvation, could not have required any thing less than our opponent ascribes to him. But, I ask again, did John refuse any one the rite of baptism, who did not profess such a repentance, based on evangelical faith, and whose belief ruled the heart, and formed the character? And did John delay the ceremony till the fruits meet for repentance appeared on these trees of righteousness? Will Mr. Stovel answer yes?—According to Mr. Noel, 'Simon Magus believed, and *professed* to believe, 'the corruption of man, his ruin by the fall, his need of a 'Saviour, the atonement made by the Son of God, regeneration

‘by the Holy Spirit, the necessity of entire obedience to the ‘law of God, the resurrection, and the future judgment.’ *Sub.* p. 73. And we are referred to Acts viii. 12, 13, in proof of this large and explicit profession of faith by the sorcerer! Alas! then, how little dependence can be placed on confessions at the baptistry! And, yet, our opponents frequently intimate, that these may be regarded as sufficient authority for dipping—the followers of Simon!—and, of course, for denouncing baby-sprinkling!

II. DISCIPLES.—This term, like that of Believers, is used in ‘a lower and a loftier sense’ in the New Testament. As we have seen, its literal and proper meaning is, a Learner, a Scholar, obtaining knowledge and skill in some school, and under some duly recognized instructor. That this word is not always expressive of real Christian adults, we may soon determine, by a reference to the oracles of truth. There were grown-up disciples, and holy disciples, and eminently distinguished disciples; and there were disciples who evidently had neither saving grace nor divine gifts. Judas was a disciple, and even one of the twelve; yet, he was destitute of divine grace. John the Baptist had disciples, of whose spiritual conversion, as Mr. Hall intimates, we have no evidence. John iii. 25. The Jews were the disciples of Moses; but, though, doubtless, baptized, and regarded as baptized Hebrews, they were, as a body, far from the righteousness of the law. *Ib.* ix. 28. Saul breathed out threatening and slaughter against the Lord’s disciples, among whom were included ‘any ‘of this way’ of thinking and living—whether they were regenerated or not. Acts ix. 1, 2. The blind man supposed that the Pharisees, by anxiously inquiring how Christ had opened his eyes, were disposed to become his disciples—evidently meaning his scholars. John ix. 27. Of the vast multitudes baptized by our Lord’s special disciples, and who thereby became nominal disciples themselves, almost all must have been, as their future conduct testified, destitute of every iota of vital religion. As we said of believers, so we say of the baptized disciples, not one in a hundred could have received the grace of God in truth.

Mr. Noel says, ‘All who are baptized, even in infancy, are, ‘in some sense, disciples.’ Hence, all the children baptized in the sea, or with their proselyted parents among the Jews, became disciples, notwithstanding their tender age. What he intends by the qualifying expression—‘in some sense’—I must leave him to explain. Probably, he means in the

'lower, and not the loftier, sense' of its application; in that we agree. Mr. Kinghorn says, 'The Church of Christ, acting upon the rule he has laid down, cannot recognize *any person* as his disciple, who is not baptized in his name.' p. 18. Between these two gentlemen, it is rendered manifest, that all infants who are baptized may be justly designated the disciples of Christ. It might be fairly put to the judgment and conscience of most ingenuous Baptists, whether they do not consider the youngest children in their families and sabbath schools, while learning the Word of God, little disciples in the school of the gospel; nor would any of them answer in the negative, when convinced that the words scholar and disciple were synonymous terms. Whether scripturally inducted to the seminaries of Christian discipleship, is another question.

Mr. Gibbs says, 'We know of no *real* discipleship to Christ upon New Testament principles, that is not founded in a 'real conversion to God.' p. 139. But does not Mr. Gibbs, by the term '*real* discipleship,' imply that there was a discipleship not founded on real conversion to God? Could he, or any other student of the New Testament, believe that there were no unconverted disciples, or persons who had been inducted to the school of Christ by baptism, without the saving regeneration of their hearts? The same reasonings apply to Mr. Noel's assertion—'No persons are *true* disciples 'but those who obey him.' *Sub.* p. 31. So, then, there were disciples that were not *true* ones; by which he means, not spiritually converted or perfect ones. Who ever doubted this? and what has the averment to do against Infant Baptism? He says, Christ 'surely wished to have true followers, and 'not false ones.' *Ib.* But does this prove, that none of them were really false ones, or that there have been no such in every age? He adds, 'Baptism cannot make a disciple 'in the lowest sense, because it cannot make even a learner 'of the Christian doctrine, still less can it make a true disciple 'a believer in Christ.' p. 32. No more can sending a boy to school make him a good scholar; but it inducts him into the path of knowledge, and gets him recognized as a young disciple, if not as a profound philosopher. I think he will concede that baptism cannot make an adult 'a learner of the Christian 'doctrine,' any more than a child; though it might effect a relationship involving a right to religious instruction in the cases of both. As cited above, he says, that 'All who are 'baptized, are disciples in some sense;' it may be a low one,

but they are disciples still; and none are recognized disciples who are not baptized! and this is all we are now contending for.

In Acts xv. 10, children of eight days old, the proper age for receiving circumcision, are indirectly, but unquestionably, 'designated disciples. 'Circumcision,' says Henry, 'was a 'yoke upon children particularly,' [almost exclusively,] 'yet 'that is called a yoke upon the necks of the disciples; therefore 'children are disciples.' p. 110. In fact, among the native Jews, none but infants were circumcised, and none but infants could be intended by the inspired writer; and yet, these are styled disciples. When Christ rode into Jerusalem, 'the 'whole *multitude* of the disciples,' [persons who had been baptized and consecrated to him, *Kinghorn*, p. 18,] 'began to 'rejoice.' Luke xix. 37. If all these were spiritually converted, what became of them afterwards? That some of this multitude were children, we may reasonably infer from the reply of Christ to the Pharisees, who complained, because 'the children cried 'in the temple, and sang Hosannah to the Son of David'— 'Have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings 'thou hast perfected praise?' Matt. xxi. 15, 16. After these remarks, I think no person will venture to affirm, that none were recognized disciples but genuine believers of adult age; or that children are not comprehended under this designation. Byron asks, 'what is a disciple?' and replies, 'a follower, a 'scholar;' adding, 'real disciples follow the Lord in the 'regeneration.' p. 26. Here he also implies a distinction, he seems unwilling to express. By real disciples, he means something beyond mere 'followers or scholars,' even truly regenerated children of God; or disciples in the highest and most spiritual sense, which does not affect our assumption—that there are disciples in another and a lower sense.

Dr. Carson remarks, 'To be called a disciple of Christ, 'implies not only to have learned something from Christ, but 'to have learned the doctrine of salvation, and to have submitted 'in all things to his teaching.' p. 258. 'If disciples only 'are to be baptized, infants are of necessity excluded.' p. 259. 'I ask the conscience of every Christian, as a matter of fact, 'is it as disciples that newly-born infants are generally 'baptized?' *Ib.* 'The persons baptized are supposed to be 'capable of being taught the ordinances enjoined by Christ, 'children then cannot be included.' p. 174. These assertions and assumptions are perfectly invalid. Surely, a person may be a scholar or disciple before he has learned the doctrines



of salvation. He becomes a disciple, in order to gain the knowledge of them. The youngest infant may be designated to a scholarship before he can enter on the enjoyment of it. Between the time of baptismal consecration to privilege and duty, a considerable period may elapse; and yet, the act itself may be reasonable and divine. The Hebrew infant was circumcised and baptized, and became a disciple of Moses, long before it recognized the advantages and obligations of its consecration. The like holds true respecting babies devoted to God and the gospel by our opponents. Besides, if learning the first lessons of religion, and being baptized, may be coeval operations, very young children, if not absolute infants, may be devoted to God in this ceremony; for even babes and sucklings may be qualified to praise the Saviour, and to understand the first lessons of piety. About the brief space of a few weeks or even months, in such a matter, I presume Mr. Carson would not argue very strenuously. If children may be baptized, Infant Baptism would not be very heartily opposed.

The case before us is analogous to that of the propounder of some new system of ethics, science, or art. He first gives a lecture or two on his chosen subject; states an outline of his proposed scheme of instruction; and then enrolls as many pupils, for subsequent training, as present themselves, or as he can procure. This inscription of their names constitutes them disciples, which they were not previously, though they had been attentive hearers of his opening discourses. Were purification of the person concurrent with the enrolment of the names, as it seems, was common among most schools and systems in ancient Greece and Rome, there would be a clear illustration of the course adopted by John and our Lord's apostles. They preached Christ as the Messiah, and stated, in general terms, the doctrines, duties, and advantages of the gospel. They then virtually, or actually, enrolled the names of all who were inclined to become disciples; and, by a baptismal ceremony, inducted them to scholarships in the school of Christianity. Mr. Noel observes, 'Till men become 'disciples of Christ, they will not listen to his commands.' p. 21. He means, they will not duly, regularly, and, with docility, attend to his systematic instructions. But, we inquire, how were they made disciples at all? It must have been done by listening to the commands or doctrines of Christ; or by some spontaneous impulse on their minds, or—and this is the only alternative—by being persuaded to be baptized unto

Christ first—as children then were, and still are, by all Pedobaptists!

Dr. Wall says, ‘In Matt. x. 42, little ones are called disciples. ‘This word is often used for Christians, saints, of or belonging ‘to Christ, brethren. Surely, children may be of Christ, ‘saints, brethren, Christians, or, if dying, they would be ‘excluded from the kingdom of God.’ v. iii. 163. The terms disciple and scholar are synonymous. Mamma’s baby on her knee, endeavouring to distinguish the round O from the other letters of the alphabet, is her little scholar or disciple; and so he will be a scholar or disciple, while advancing through all the grades of increasing knowledge, till possibly astonishing and benefitting mankind, by his literary or scientific attainments.—It has been observed, that as children are ‘*God’s servants*,’ (Lev. xxv. 41, 42,) there appears nothing incongruous with Scripture phraseology to call the like, ‘*Christ’s disciples*.’ Mr. Noel asserts, ‘Believers alone are ‘called disciples in the New Testament.’ p. 85. Well, then, many disciples went back from Christ, as did also many believers; consequently, persons may be disciples and believers too, and yet have no real godliness of heart!

On this point, Dr. Gale says, ‘Ask a *countryman*’ [he intends, with Mr. Booth, an illiterate ploughman] ‘what he ‘means by the word *scholar*? and he will tell you, he means ‘one that goes to school to learn; and what by a *disciple*?— ‘one that holds such a man’s opinions, and thinks his way ‘best. And you will find the countryman understands his ‘mother tongue *better* than some others seem to do; and if ‘he uses more honest simplicity, he uses more reason too in ‘explaining his meaning, than the bias of interest and parties ‘will suffer some men of letters to do.’ p. 242. The appeal of our opponents to the notions of an untutored Englishman, respecting the sense of a Greek word, is absurd—as if he knew that learner, scholar, pupil, and disciple, were expressed by one and the same term in the original language of the New Testament! This is just a specimen of the polemical tactics of many of our Baptist brethren.

But, it is argued, that persons were made disciples before they were baptized. Noel:—‘As those baptized by the ‘Priests conformed to the Mosaic Ritual, and those baptized ‘by John, professed their belief of his doctrine, so those ‘baptized by the disciples, professed their belief in the doctrine ‘of Jesus. And this is declared by the brief record which ‘states that Jesus made and baptized disciples. John iv. 1.

‘The disciples, therefore, baptized those only who were first ‘made their fellow disciples.’ *Sub.* p. 61. This, I believe, is the only passage where discipleship is placed before baptism; and here the terms are so intimate, that such a simultaneous act as ‘proselyte baptizing,’ mentioned in the commission, is evidently intended. Mr. Noel explains the case clearly in a preceding page. ‘As the baptized proselyte became, by ‘Jewish baptism, the *avowed* disciple of Moses, entitled to ‘all Mosaic ordinances; so the baptized Christian proselyte ‘becomes, by baptism, the *avowed* disciple of Christ, entitled ‘to all Christian ordinances,’ [of which he is capable.] *Ib.* p. 48. After baptism, the person is *recognized* as a disciple, and not before, though he might have been a hearer of the apostles—as the three thousand were on the day of Pentecost—previous to their baptism.

Dorrington paraphrases the above text:—‘He made and entered, or admitted them, his disciples, by baptizing them, p. 133. Mr. Carson says—‘*καὶ*’—*and*—‘often signifies *even*.’ Supposing this to be the sense here, the text would plainly harmonize with the commission, and the repeated admissions of our brethren. ‘He made *even* baptized more disciples ‘than John.’ That this is the true sense of the expression, I believe, will be conceded by most competent and unbiassed witnesses. It certainly accords with the analogies of the case, as exhibited in other parts of the New Testament. In the latter clause of the verse, the word ‘baptized,’ evidently embraces all that was meant by ‘made and baptized’ in the former. Mr. Noel’s notion of ‘*The disciples baptizing their ‘fellow disciples,*’ is manifestly most incongruous—the disciples baptizing one another! And yet, if his premises be true, his inference, however odd, cannot be fairly averted!

Christ said, ‘The disciple is not above his master, nor the ‘servant above his Lord.’ Matt. x. 24. Consequently, as the servant is under his master’s direction, the disciple is under his master’s instruction, and not a mere casual hearer of his occasional lectures. And while Jesus walked in Galilee, ‘His ‘brethren said unto him, depart hence, and go into Judea, ‘that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.’ John vi. 3. These disciples were those who became attached to the Saviour, and received instruction from his teachings and miracles. Master and disciple are correlative terms. There can be no master without a disciple, nor a disciple without a master—any more than there can be a husband without a wife—or a wife without a husband.

The Pharisees said to the man who had been born blind, 'Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples;' meaning to charge him with regarding Christ as his teacher, as they regarded Moses as theirs, and to whom they were consecrated in their childhood. John ix. 28. As Mr. Noel says above, 'Till men become disciples of Christ, they will not listen to 'his commands:' that is, they will not duly attend his school or class for instructions. Indeed, no young person is a disciple of a master in philosophy, art, or literature, till he has been formally inducted to his seminary. Mr. Noel says, 'A sinner 'is called to become a disciple first, and then to profess discipleship in baptism, and to receive instruction in the details 'of a Christian life.' *Ib.* p. 23. Of course, people are called to be disciples before they, actually and professedly, become such by baptism; as we canvass for sabbath school scholars before we get them into our schools; or, as young men are made willing to become soldiers, by the recruiting sergeant, before they are formally sworn into her Majesty's service. Many arguments or motives may be adduced to fill the school, or to win over the men to a military life; but they are not recognized as complete or real scholars or soldiers, till their names are duly enrolled. So, many efforts, and eloquent appeals, and miracles, were employed to induce the Jews and Gentiles to become Christians; but they were not deemed disciples till they were initiated by baptism; nor had they the privileges of being regularly and systematically taught the doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel, till they were properly inducted to the congregations or schools of Christianity. There were disciples of a higher and lower grade; as there are ranks in a regiment, or upper and under servants in a large establishment. But the least and lowest is as really a soldier or a servant, as those of the topmost rank or position.

Possibly, some persons imagine, that to be 'the disciples of Christ,' and 'the friends of Christ' are synonymous expressions. This, however, is not necessarily the case. Doubtless, Judas Iscariot was baptized, and, therefore, a disciple of Christ; but he was anything but his friend. Many were baptized by our Saviour's immediate followers, and became his disciples; but, instead of being his cordial friends, they went back and walked no more with him. Of the multitudes made disciples by John the Baptist, whose office and aim were to make ready a people prepared to receive, trust, and love the Lord, few turned out the real friends of



the Saviour. And our opponents, by painful observation, discover that thousands made willing to become disciples by their preaching, and recognized as such by being immersed, prove, in the long run, anything but real friends of our blessed Redeemer, or of themselves either. As they might have many disciples in their secular schools who had little affection for their teachers; so, in the schools of Christianity, there may be many pupils who cherish no real love to Christ, his people, or his cause. It has often been remarked, that many of the disciples who lauded the Son of David on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a few days afterwards, joined in the cry, invoking his death on the cross. Nor is there anything very unlikely in the supposition.

III. CONVERTS is a word descriptive of people whose views, conduct, or hearts have been changed by preaching, teaching, providence, or the Spirit of God. It is well-known that there may be a change of sentiment, without a renewal of the heart; that men may alter in conduct, without a renovation of spirit; and we know, that the former often takes place, while the latter remains in all its native corruption, obduracy, and love of sin. This distinction being confessedly admitted, it rests with our opponents to prove that spiritual conversion, or the renewing of the soul by the Holy Ghost, was looked for as an essential and invariable prerequisite, to baptism. If they cannot do this, their plea, that none but spiritually regenerated men only should be baptized, will be found to be utterly unavailing. This will be more particularly the case, if they are unable to point to a single text, where the profession and demand of this great change are ever mentioned as essential to the valid reception and administration of this ordinance. The words converts, conversion, and converted, are not found in our translation of the New Testament more than about ten times; though others, of the same general import, are of frequent occurrence. Our Lord said to his twelve disciples, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. xviii. 3. How far this necessarily means the same as spiritual regeneration, I leave our good brethren to determine. Simon, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Luke xxii. 32. 'Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

James v. 19, 20. These passages manifestly refer to the restoration of a brother to the exercise of faith, or to his abandonment of error; neither of which conveys the idea of an original conversion of the soul to God, or of that new birth which is effected by the Holy Spirit. As men, not truly Christians, may be converted from Mahomedanism, or Paganism, to Christianity, or from Popery to Protestantism; so men were converted from Judaism and Infidelity to an adoption of the creed of the gospel, without guaranteeing a divine renovation of soul.

There is a sense in which it may be said, all that were baptized by John and the immediate followers of Christ, were converted. Their minds were changed, or their views respecting the coming Messiah, were altered; or they would not have become even his temporary disciples, or have been admitted to his purifyings and consecrations. But it is certain, that this conversion was, in most instances, only sentimental, superficial, and temporary. The good seed was sown on a rock; and, at most, like washing the sow that soon after wallowed again in the mire. They endure not to the end. Because of the faithful words of truth, subsequently spoken to them, they were offended. They went out from the associations of the faithful, because, in reality, they were not of them; for, had they been so, they, doubtless, would have continued with them. As the terms Believers and Disciples are used in a large and loose sense, as well as a limited and specific one; so the term Convert has its general as well as its definite meaning. As we sometimes employ the word in a strict and confined sense, so occasionally do the inspired writers; and as we extend its meaning to a wider range of import, so do the sacred historians. Hence, upon the simple use of the word, unless the connexion shall prove that it means a spiritual change of heart; no fair expounder of the oracles of truth would aver, that the subject of it was really and truly become a spiritual child of God. Indeed, were it affirmed that a thousand people were converted, the language, in its scriptural sense, would not be a certain guarantee for the regeneration of any one of them. In a word, while a person is regenerated but once, he may need and experience conversion many times over in the course of his life.

IV. CHRISTIANS.—This name was first given to the disciples at Antioch, possibly by their enemies, and by way of reproach, like the appellations of Nazarenes and Galileans. Acts xi. 26. But, whether by friends or foes, is not much to

the purpose before us. It is used only twice besides in the word of God. 'Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou 'persuadest me to be a Christian.' *Ib.* xxvi. 28. 'If any 'man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let 'him glorify God on this behalf.' 1 Peter iv. 16. Whether we should construe the term in any of these texts as necessarily implying truly spiritual persons, is not certain. Nor is it material. We never read of a Christian being baptized; that is, the name is never employed to designate a candidate for this service. And here it is worthy of reiteration, that, while our opponents enlarge so much on baptizing *Christians*, such an act is unknown in the New Testament. Jews and Heathens were baptized unto Christ, or unto Christianity; yet Christians were never said to be baptized unto either. Indeed, the language would be as unmeaning, as to talk of baptizing, dedicating, or initiating a Jew to Judaism, a Hindoo to Hindooism, or a Turk to Mahomedanism!

The assumption that none, or but few, would submit to baptism, and consort with the sincere followers of Christ, who were not truly renewed in their minds by the Spirit of God, is in no degree warranted. We know, by the after conduct and apostacy of numbers of the baptized, that spiritually unconverted people did so. Nor, as previously observed, is this to be wondered at, considering the anticipations and hopes of the enthralled and afflicted Jewish nation, of a Messiah who should deliver them from the Roman yoke. And after witnessing the numerous and stupendous miracles the apostles performed, the surprise is, not that so many, really unregenerated persons, whom we call the early Christians, gave in their adhesion to the gospel economy; but, that every being in the country, good, bad, and indifferent, did not follow their example, and permanently adhere to him and the cause he established. Respecting the term *Christian*, as employed in the precited texts, it no more vouches for the real piety of those who might have been known under that name, than the words, a *Christian congregation*, now necessarily guarantees, that all its members are spiritual followers of Christ, or, that the term, *Christendom*, comprehends only true and devout disciples of Jesus Christ. The term *Christian* very early became the common appellation of all who professed Christianity, with their families and dependents, as distinguished from heathens and Jews. *Bardesanes*, the Syrian, Justin's contemporary, says, 'that the followers of the Christian institution, though 'living in widely distant parts of the globe, and under the

‘influence of different climates, *were yet all called by the name of Christians.*’ *Blakey’s Prim. Fathers*, p. 12.

There is a fact, previously hinted at, worthy of repetition in this place. Many persons, reported to have become Believers, Disciples, Converts, &c., were not induced to become such by any systematic or verbal instructions, but by seeing, or hearing of, the miracles performed by Christ or his apostles; just as the Hebrews became Believers in Moses, by witnessing the wonders he performed in Egypt. Consequently, they became such when they did not understand the doctrines of the gospel, and before they were taught by Christ himself or any of his ministers. Nathaniel is said to have believed, because the Messiah declared he saw him under the fig tree, where he thought the eye of man could not have discovered him. John i. 5. When Christ turned water into wine, many of his disciples believed on him. *Ib.* ii. 11. Many of the Samaritans believed for the saying of the woman, who declared that Christ had told her all that ever she did. *Ib.* iv. 39. When the Jews witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead, many of them believed. *Ib.* xi. 45. On seeing the solemn judgment of God on Ananias and his wife, for their falsehoods, believers were the more added unto the Lord, both men and women. Acts v. 14. When Peter raised Dorcas to life, numbers believed in the Lord. *Ib.* ix. 42. It is very probable that many more believed on account of the miracles, than through comprehending the distinguishing doctrines our Saviour taught. All these people were, speaking generally, Believers, Converts, Christians; and probably, were made disciples by baptism; though few of them gave signs of being renewed by the Holy Ghost. They believed, at least for a time, that Jesus was the Messiah; that he came forth from God; and that his apostles were commissioned to instruct mankind in the saving and sanctifying knowledge of the gospel. Even Christ himself appealed from his discourses to his operations, as being more convincing and satisfactory—‘If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.’ John x. 37, 38.

The distinctions we have drawn respecting the lower and loftier, the narrower and wider, senses of the words referred to above, are recognized by every section of the general church. There is not an evangelical Baptist minister in this country, who, in his pulpit discourses, does not make the like difference between Believers, Disciples, Converts,



and Christians, in name and in reality ; between the true and the false professor, the sincere and the hypocritical ; between conversion in sentiment and profession, and conversion of heart to God ; who would not admit that this momentous distinction was as needful in the age of the apostles as in any subsequent generation ; and who would not feel that any preachers belonging to their body, generally disregarding it, ought to be reproved, as very incompetent and dangerous teachers of others. Mr. Booth calls those who followed and then forsook Christ, 'Nominal disciples.' v. 3. p. 448. Mr. Draper says, 'By these means,' [infant sprinkling, &c.] 'whole nations are become nominal Christians, so that no one 'can tell which is the church, and which is the world.' p. 25. So, after all, there are nominal disciples and nominal Christians ! About the difficulty of distinguishing the spiritual church from the nominal, and both from the world of Jews, Turks, and heathens, we need not be much perplexed. We must try the spirits of preachers and of people too ; and thence discover if their fruits are meet for a spiritual repentance. I venture to think, that our Baptist churches are not long at a loss in discovering the precious from the vile—those that serve God and those that serve him not.

When Byron says, 'Every Christian has a new creature 'formed or created in him ;' p. 30 ; surely, he does not intend, that every person called a Christian by himself and his brethren, has this new creature formed in him ! If he does, he is deceiving himself ; and if he does not, his language is calculated to deceive others. It is only in the baptismal controversy, that a force is attempted to be placed on the abstract sense of the above expressions which the Scriptures will not always warrant. No person, conversant with the Word of God, will deny, that most of the leading terms of evangelical truth have very different or varied applications. Take the words faith, friends, brethren, hope, worship, grace, everlasting, sacrifice, &c., and it will be readily seen, that as all highly-valued things—such as gold and precious stones, have their counterfeits—so have all these different characters and graces. There is a living and a dead faith, a true and a false friend, brother, and hope ; spiritual and formal worship—just as there are genuine Believers, Christians, Converts, and Disciples ; and mere imitations of them. Everlasting is used in a full and a limited sense. There is an acceptable sacrifice, as well as the sacrifice of fools ; a repentance unto life ; and a repentance to be repented of.

The simple minded or the prejudiced reader may reply, that if the terms of Scripture are employed with such various applications—‘having a lower or a loftier sense in different ‘connexions’—is there not a vagueness and indefiniteness in the language, calculated to render the meaning of it very difficult, especially to ordinary and superficial readers? That there are such distinctions, all intelligent and candid students of the Bible will admit. They will also further concede, that there are few common nouns or general verbs in the Scripture, or in any other volume, which are not employed, by the writers of them in a higher and a lower, a larger and a lesser, sense, in different connexions. This arises from the paucity of words in every language, to express the numerous shades of characters, diversities of operations, and the endless mental conceptions and combinations, which exist or spring into being. Still, this circumstance presents no very formidable obstacle to the due understanding of the revealed will of God, or of the intentions of a competent writer, when carefully and devoutly read. The connexion of words, and the evident scope of an argument, the train of thought, and the course of the narrative, render the sense of the author tolerably plain to thoughtful readers; and no others should expect to become masters of their lessons. In addition to this, we may observe, that God has, in all times, appointed scribes, priests, prophets, preachers, and teachers of his word, to make it plain to the unlettered mind, and to impress its truth on the consciences, of men. For what else are they appointed?

Further, there are other signs than those involved in the above appellations—Believers, Disciples, Converts, and Christians—by which true and holy people are distinguished easily enough from formal professors, by all who carefully and diligently examine them. Their manifest love to Christ and to each other; their faith, overcoming temptation and persecution; their zeal and self-sacrificing, to promote the cause and glory of God; their holy conduct, in the different relations of life; their attendance on, and support of, the means of grace; their endurance to the end in obedience to Christ, reliance on his atonement, and the promotion of his glorious cause. These were formerly the distinguishing marks of true disciples, real converts, heartfelt believers, and genuine Christians; and by such traits, and not by mere names, are their true characters now to be tested. The argument sometimes employed by our opponents, that as the words, Believers, Disciples, Christians, and Converts, do often, if not in the majority of instances,

mean genuine followers of Christ, they should always be regarded in that light, in connexion with the baptismal controversy, is most inconclusive; and which would be pleaded only in case of great and conscious difficulties in otherwise maintaining adult and believers' immersion, and in opposing infant affusion.

It is like assuming, that as *Baptizo* is sometimes used for dipping; therefore, who or whatever is to be baptized must be dipped; or, like assuming, that dipping is the primary sense of the verb, and therefore, it must be always so understood, when persons are to be baptized. Would our respectable opponents reason and conclude in a similar way, in any case, beside that of dipping believers? Mr. Noel says, 'I have heard men appealed to, in the pulpit, as *Christians*, 'living in known sin; Christians, neglecting the Bible and prayer; Christians, ungodly in heart and life. Addressed as 'Christians, they would not think that they needed a complete 'change.' p. 286. But what has this to do against infant, more than against adult, baptism? Are there not many such Christians, as the above, in all Baptist congregations and churches; and do not the ministers, sometimes, address them, among the rest, as their 'dear Christian brethren!' And do they exclude from these soul-deceiving designations even their most unsanctified attendants!

Mr. Stovel says, 'In Rome, in Germany, in Canterbury, in Geneva, in Scotland: or rather in those churches which have a peculiar relation to those names, as well as amongst many nonconformists in England, the word *Christian*, has undergone a decisive change in its import,' [since when?] 'It no longer means' [as among the Baptists] 'a man who is following Christ in the spirit of martyrdom. The Church' [except our own] 'is no longer a society made up of such persons. The character and practices of the' [Pedobaptist] 'church can no longer be reconciled to the rule of human action implied in that description of character. The whole system of practical Christianity has clearly undergone a change which is not for the better, but for the worse. It is no longer possible to say, in the words of St. Paul, "ye, as many as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ:" "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," [except in those churches which maintain believers' baptism!] 'The advocates of evangelical religion, themselves, plead for 'a church within the church;' [which I do not!] 'and thus, 'they confess that the Christian community has fallen from its

‘original purity and devotedness.’ *Reg. Lect. iv. p. 4.* ‘This ‘process of degradation in the Christian church became both ‘more obvious and more rapid after the time of Cyprian,’ [who was martyred A.D. 258,] ‘when the doctrine of sacramental ‘grace....led to the introduction of Infant Baptism and ‘promiscuous baptism.’ *Ib.* Mr. Stovel here intimates that Infant Baptism was introduced after the time of Cyprian—when his own party repeatedly admits it had been practised, at least, 50 years before! That the word Christian has undergone a change in its import from the sense it had in the earliest times, or that what was designated a church at first has undergone a change for the worse, we have only his declaration for it. And if the Baptists have not a church within a church, they manifestly fail to observe the twofold senses in which the word is evidently used in the New Testament, and recognized even by the best men in their own denomination, when not advocating their own distinctive principles. The above high, yet groundless, assumptions of this polemic are in keeping with many others found in his controversial publications.

SECTION TENTH.—*The system into which the Hebrews were baptized was moral and spiritual equally with that of the gospel.*—That there were many things in the Mosaic institutions, secular in nature, and temporary in duration, no one will deny. ‘The first covenant had also ordinances of ‘divine service, and a worldly sanctuary; meats and drinks, ‘and divers washings, and carnal ordinances and shadows of ‘good things to come.’ Heb. ix. 1, 10; x. 1. The High Priest was made after ‘the law of a carnal commandment.’ *Ib.* vii. 16. The Hebrew church, however, is never called carnal; while the church or congregation at Corinth is repeatedly so designated by the apostle. ‘And I, brethren, ‘could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, ‘even as unto babes in Christ. Ye are carnal; for whereas ‘there is among you, envyings, strifes, and divisions, are ye ‘not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am ‘of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?’ 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3, 4. Nor let any one imagine, that carnal ordinances were confined to the Old Testament dispensation. The baptism of the body is as carnal an ordinance as the circumcision of the flesh; and eating the elements of the Lord’s supper is as carnal an act as eating the paschal lamb, or as feasting on the sacrifices originally offered on the altar of the Lord.



The ancient covenant, moreover, had also numerous purely moral and spiritual laws, doctrines and promises. Even those rites which were to be done away in Christ were, like the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's supper now, symbolical of great existing and expected blessings, and contained lessons of high evangelical import. The first Testament had Jehovah as the object of supreme reverence, obedience, and love. It had Christ among them, as their Teacher, Leader, and Lord; and whose great atonement for sin was set forth in signs and types of daily recurrence. Faith in this glorious Saviour was required; and devout and spiritual worship was claimed for him. His voice was to be obeyed in all things. Holy convocations were appointed every seventh day, to advance the spiritual interests of the attendants. A beautiful tabernacle was constructed, as a habitation for the Lord, in the midst of their tents; and afterwards a gorgeous temple was erected in their holy city, as a palace for the great King. The gospel, which before had been preached unto Abraham, was also proclaimed to the Hebrews during all their polity; as it has been since, in every successive generation. Those commandments, on which hung all the law and the prophets, were in the former covenant. 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God 'with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy 'might.' Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37-40. When Paul was accused of heresy before the Roman governors, he replied, that he was not setting up a new religion, but simply explaining and enforcing that of his ancestors. 'I confess unto thee, 'most noble Felix, that after the way which they call heresy, 'so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things 'which are written in the law and in the prophets.' Acts xxiv. 14. 'Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, 'witnessing both to small and great, saying none other 'things than those which the prophets and Moses did say 'should come; that Christ should suffer, &c. *Ib.* xxvi. 22, 23.

Indeed, there is not a material doctrine, duty, or promise, in the New Testament, which may not be found in the Old, and even in the writings of Moses himself. In the latter, the development may not always be so complete, nor the light so clear, nor the evidence so striking, as in the records and epistles of the New Testament. But, there is the gospel, there is Christ, there is redemption, there is holiness; in a word, there is every truth essential to evangelical piety and the eternal salvation of man; and, through believing and obeying which, millions of Hebrews went to glory before the

Saviour became incarnate, or John had baptized a single Jew on the banks of the Jordan. 'And beginning at Moses and 'all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.' Luke xxiv. 27.

It is to the moral and spiritual portion of this economy that Paul alludes in his address to the Corinthians. The Israelites are not accused of having violated their baptismal covenant, by neglecting purification, sacrifices, oblations, rites, or ceremonies; but, by transgressing the great moral and spiritual laws of God; by idolatry, fornication, murmurings, departing from the Lord, and rebelling against him—sins in every age and religious dispensation. To these latter great principles God referred in the day of their emancipation. 'For I spake 'not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that 'I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt 'offerings and sacrifices; but, this thing commanded I them, 'saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye 'shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I 'have commanded you; that it may be well unto you.' Jer. vii. 22, 23.

In referring to the same subject, Paul places the exclusion of their ancestors—who left Egypt of full age—from the Holy Land, on the ground, not of ceremonial transgressions, but of moral or rather of spiritual offences. 'To whom sware he 'that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed 'not? So you see that they could not enter in because of un-'belief.' Heb. iii. 18, 19. He adds, 'Let us labour, therefore, 'to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same ex-'ample of unbelief.' *Ib.* iv. 11. 'I will, therefore,' says Jude, 'put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how 'that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of 'Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not.' v. 5. Such sins the baptized Corinthians, and others in their day and circumstances, were in great danger of committing, and against such Paul earnestly warns his immediate readers, and, through them, all contemporary professors of religion, and even all succeeding generations, during the Christian dispensation. Consequently, so far there can be no reasonable ground for demurring to a recognition of the baptism in the Red Sea, as the beginning, and, in every important feature, the pattern of Christian baptism, and as throwing a great light on the ordinance, at least, as to the proper subjects of its administration. But, in order to set this part of our discussion in a still clearer aspect, and to remove any doubts

that may arise concerning it in certain minds; I shall suppose the reader ready to put several questions to the author. These I shall plainly state, and endeavour to answer to his satisfaction.

QUESTION I.—*Are you not regarding a simple act of Hebrew baptism as though it were a solemn institution of a perpetual ordinance?*—We regard it as confessedly recognized by the apostle, and as fully admitted by some of our intelligent opponents. Paul argues from it, as from a great and instructive fact. Mr. Stovel views it as conveying ‘a very ‘powerful and solemn confirmation’ of Christian baptism. Mr. Kenilworth calls it ‘a pattern and prelude’ of our holy ordinance. It was an event in the history of the Hebrews, well-known to Paul and others, to which he refers the Corinthians, and on which he founds a caution to them against immorality and unbelief. On this we do not directly or immediately base our present duty and practice of baptizing any one. The commission of our Lord is our warrant for administering this rite under the fully set up gospel economy, or for continuing to observe this ancient ceremony to the end of time among his disciples. We refer to the declaration of Paul as an exposition of what our Lord concisely enjoined upon his followers. The words of our text contain and explain the apostle’s views of the nature of our Lord’s injunction; and the spiritual improvement of an occurrence which took place in the Red Sea, and which, in effect, was continued among the Jews during all their subsequent generations. He does not refer to this baptism unto Moses as expressly warranting baptism unto Christ, but as affording a lesson of holy caution and admonition. The Paschal Supper, instituted in the time of Moses, would not, of itself, have authorized us to continue any part of the institution under the gospel. For doing this, we refer to the express command of Christ; and the Lord’s Passover is consequently observed among us on the same grounds. But, the ancient observance of it in Egypt, throws much light on the later injunctions of the Son of God. The baptism in the sea sheds a light on the baptisms of John and of the apostles. And so do the baptisms of cleansings, washings, and purifyings, daily administered under the Mosaic law; being frequently referred to by the sacred penmen of the New Testament, and designated ‘*divers baptisms.*’ [Greek]. To these we are necessitated to refer for explanations respecting the modes and subjects of baptism, as we have confessedly no explicit

rules on these heads in the New Testament; and the instances of which are not sufficiently detailed readily to direct us in this service, without the light shed upon them by the clearer and more specific accounts of the former economy.

This great baptism in the Red Sea, we regard as expository of the baptism in Jerusalem. In that sense it is referred to by the apostle. It was the first administration of this rite, on a large scale; and was performed by Jehovah himself. It may be safely viewed as the beginning of the numerous baptisms recorded in the holy writings. In the original narrative, it is not explained as minutely as the subsequent consecrations and purifications. But two points are rendered clear and indisputable—that people of all religious characters and ages were dedicated unto Moses by baptism; and that this was done, not by dipping them under water, but by simply affusing or sprinkling them with that element. By this service children were inducted into the privileges and responsibilities of Hebrewism, as much so as the adults themselves. This is all we are here attempting to prove; and this is all we require, in order to complete our knowledge of baptism, and to defend our practice in the present age. All other points are sufficiently explicit in the New Testament. For the exposition of this question, adequate to remove our difficulties, we are indebted to the incidental allusions of Paul. Nor is this a singular instance of deriving a commentary, on obscure points in the New Testament, from references to the rites, usages, and declarations of the old; as the reader will learn elsewhere. God does not explain all his mind in one chapter of the Scriptures, nor in one book, nor even in one testament. But in the entire canon of revelation, we are enabled to discover all we need to understand, and how to perform the whole will of God. All the lessons of wisdom, concerning material nature, cannot be learned in one county or country; but from a survey of the entire globe. The Christian requires not to be informed, that an inspired exposition of an Old Testament act, or the evangelical application of an Old Testament rite, to New Testament operations, stands upon the same footing as any others originally given by Christ and his apostles, and is of equal authority in the congregations of God.

QUESTION II.—*Are you not placing the Old Testament church too much on a par with that of the New?*—Dr. Carson: ‘It is often said, that the Jewish church was the same with the Christian. There is just such a portion of truth in this assertion, as to enable it to impose upon the ignorant. But,



‘with respect to everything which can concern this argument, it is manifestly false. Is the Christian church that rejected the great body of the Jewish nation, the same with the Jewish church, which, by God’s own appointment, contained the whole nation? Was the church into which its members were born, the same with the church whose members must be born from above—born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God? Was the church that admitted every stranger to its passover, without any condition of faith or character, merely on complying with a certain regulation that gave circumcision to their males, without any condition of faith or character, the same with the church that requires faith and true holiness in all who enjoy its ordinances? Was the church that contained the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sadducees—the most cruel, determined, open, and malignant enemies of Christ—the same with that church in which such persons could not enter without a spiritual birth? The church of Israel, and, as a whole, could no more be called the church of Christ, in the sense of that phrase in the New Testament, than the nation of England can be called the church of Christ. . . . Whatever unity may be supposed to be in the Jewish church and the church of the New Testament, it does not consist in sameness of members, or of ordinances. The one, by its constitution, included carnal members; the other, by its constitution, admits spiritual members only. This, then, is the only point of view in which the subject can have any reference to the controversy on baptism. This difference existing, no number of points of coincidence can avail our opponents.’  
p. 233, 234.

Mr. Draper says, ‘Not a few mistakes have arisen from the common error of regarding the Jewish and Christian churches as one and the same; whereas the points of difference are great and manifold. Persons were born members of the Jewish church, but the members of the Christian church are all regenerate, or “born from above; born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The Jewish church included the Sadducees, and Pharisees, and multitudes who were the enemies of truth and of the Lord Jesus. Can this church be the same which admits none but penitent believers in the Lord Jesus as its members? The church among the Jews included the whole nation; but who can regard the whole English people as belonging to the true church of the

'living God? none but those persons who practically reject 'the revealed will of Heaven. And the ordinances of the 'Jewish church are expressly abolished.' p. 80.

Mr. Keach reasons, 'We deny not but the Jewish infants 'were members of God's legal church, but, I ask you, whether 'John's baptism was a legal ordinance, or a pure gospel 'ordinance, as circumcision was, prove it; we deny it, and 'say it was evangelical, and did not appertain to the Jews, 'or the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh as such.... 'I am troubled to see how you' [Mr. Owen] 'confound your 'people's understanding. Was the Jewish church, or the 'visible church of God, under the law, and the visible gospel 'church, formally and materially, one and the same? Had 'the Jews a right to all gospel ordinances and privileges, 'because they abode in his legal visible church till the death 'of Christ? We grant the invisible church of God, under 'law and gospel, is but one and the same; but doth not the 'gospel church, in its ordinances, administrations, rights, and 'privileges, vastly differ from the legal? Was not the visible 'church, under the law, a national church, made up of the 'Jewish people only, and is the gospel church not congrega- 'tional, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles that believe, or 'are born of the Spirit?' p. 181.

That the means of spiritual instruction enjoyed by the early Hebrew church were less simple, direct, and extensive, than those enjoyed by the early Christian church, I have in effect already conceded; nor am I prepared to recall the admission. The sources of enlightenment were accumulating with every fresh inspiration, and became more manifestly established by the continuous fulfilment of prophecy, especially of those predictions which related to the Messiah. Yet, probably, the holiest generation of the Israelites were those baptized in childhood in the Red Sea, and most of whom eventually entered the Holy Land. Judges ii. 6, 7. These came not far behind the people called Christians during the first half century in our era, in piety and obedience to God; and especially so, if we take the differences of their means, and their circumstances, into our calculation. We hesitate not to say, that, using the word Christians in its broad and general import—for all who professed the faith of the gospel, as distinguished from other religionists—the adherents to Christianity, during the last eighteen hundred years, have not, as a whole, been more enlightened, united, holy, faithful, and obedient to God, than were the Israelitish nation, during the

fifteen hundred years which elapsed from the exodus out of Egypt to the coming of the Messiah. Christianity never had greater and better men and women, than were found in the church of the Hebrews; and, it is probable, that the relative numbers, of the truly religious people in Israel, were as great as they have been in Christendom since the ascension of the Saviour to heaven. Were we to affirm, that to be baptized into the ancient Israelitish church, was but little, if any thing, less honourable and advantageous, than being baptized into the Christian church; we should be sustained by the recorded practical fruits of such a connexion. Or, if we could correctly compare the 'True Israel' *in* the nominal Israel, with the 'True Christians,' *among* the nominal Christians, the like conclusion would be the result.

This view of the question may be further sustained by the manifest interest which Jehovah took in the Hebrew church. If words have any meaning, God delighted in it as he never did in the early church of the New Testament. One might fill pages with his declarations respecting the holiness of his ancient people, or of many of them, and of his strong affection for them. And they are such as leave no doubt in our minds, that they were not, at least, behind the New Testament church in his estimation. The following passages are adduced only as specimens:—'Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.' Ex. xix. 6. 'For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' Deut. vii. 6. 'Blessed be the Lord thy God, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice.' 1 Kings x. 9. 'The holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of the lands.' Ezra ix. 2. 'And shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, sought out, a city not forsaken.' Is. lxii. 12. 'The Lord hath appeared unto me saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have delivered the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies.' Jer. xii. 7. 'Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.' Is. xxvi. 2. Peter, describing the New Testament church, in its highest state of purity, employs the expressions used aforetime to characterize the church of the Old Testament. 'But ye are a chosen generation, a

‘royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of God who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ 1 Peter ii. 9. Language more strong or striking, expressive of God’s esteem of, and love for, the New Testament church, than some of the above quotations, descriptive of the old, cannot be met with in the writings of the evangelists or apostles; while the severe terms in which God reproves and condemns many persons and actions among the Jews, evidently find a parallel in his censures and judgments on the evil thoughts and the sinful deeds of those who unworthily or hypocritically profess the Christian faith.

In comparing the former and existing economies of revealed religion, it seems that many of our opponents describe the *ceremonially* consecrated Hebrews, and the *spiritually* converted Christians; and then exhibit the former as far less pure than the latter. But, no reasonings could be more erroneous in themselves, or more unjust towards the Jewish church. The regenerated Israelites and the regenerated Gentiles are the parties to be compared; and the merely dedicated Israelites with the merely dedicated Gentiles. All the baptized under the law, and all the baptized under the gospel, are to be viewed as offering a fair ground of comparison. While those of both dispensations, who were born of the Spirit of God, are to be contemplated as exhibiting features, bearing the impress of their heavenly parentage. Christians after the flesh, and Israelites after the flesh; the Christian after the Spirit, and the Israelite after the Spirit; can only come into a fair and righteous comparison. The Jewish church and the Christian church, in the widest sense of the language, are to be viewed as justly answering to each other. While the Jewish church and the Christian church, in their limited sense—embracing only the renewed and the righteous—must be deemed as maintaining a similar relative position. Judaism and Christianity are terms which convey similar general views of the past and present dispensations of divine truth. To describe the fellowship of gospel saints, the holy lives of converted spirits, and their zeal for pure religion; and then exultingly to exclaim, how different from the church or congregation in the wilderness, containing the entire nation of Israel, is inequitable and absurd. And then to infer that though infants and unspiritual adults might be baptized into this broad Jewish communion of old, they should not be baptized into the limited fellowship of regenerated believers



now, is grossly illogical and inconclusive. The only fair inference is, that the like description of persons, as to character and age, that might be baptized into the general Israelitish community, may be baptized into the general Christian community; and that such as composed the inner church among the Jews may still compose the inner church among Christians.

When Mr. Draper says, 'Persons were born members of the Jewish Church; but the members of the Christian Church are all regenerate, or born from above;' he proffers statements only calculated to mystify the subject, and to mislead the reader. If by the 'Christian Church,' he means the true spiritual *invisible* church of Christ; we perfectly agree with him; that none are real members of it, who are not regenerated or born from above. But if he means the *visible* 'Christian Church,' or the society of professed believers in Christ, such as are constituted by both Baptists and Pedobaptists denominations, in this country, he is evidently in gross error; for none are born into such fellowships; and, doubtless, many pertain to them who are not renewed in their hearts by the Spirit of God. And if he means the *general* church, the *Ecclesia*, or congregation of Christians, as distinguished from Jews and heathens, he is equally in error; since none are recognized as pertaining to it till they are baptized into it. People are born human beings, but they are, correctly speaking, constituted disciples, or nominal Christians, only by being formally dedicated to Christ, enrolled among his people, and officially placed under his especial care and mediatorial dominion.

The like held true with respect to the ancient Hebrews. Persons were not 'born members of the Jewish church,' though they were born of Jewish parents; nor were all born in the Promised Land necessarily members of the Hebrew nation. Those not formally consecrated to God, were not of the sanctified congregation, whether descended from the stock of Abraham, or proselyted from the Gentiles. There are two aspects in which the Jewish community—like the English—must be regarded. There were the sanctified and the unholy, the circumcised and the profane. These distinctions are manifest throughout the entire history of that interesting people. There was no incorporation of any persons with them, as the church of God, but by ritual consecration. No alien could be religiously joined with them without circumcision and baptism. If any of their own people, even though a priest or a prince, became unclean, he was viewed

as a stranger, till he was purified and introduced afresh into their holy associations. As children were born in sin, and were unclean till they were washed and circumcised, or, at least, till either of those rites was performed on them; we may reasonably conclude, they would not be deemed members of the Jewish Church. We can readily perceive, that had a tribe or a family of that nation abandoned the use of these initiatory rites, they would not have been regarded as Jews; at any rate, in their religious characters, or been ecclesiastically united with that people. They could not have eaten of the passover, nor have entered into the temple, beyond the court of the Gentiles; nor could they have held any office in the service of God. They would have been, in these respects, like the uncircumcised heathen, or as persons in a state of nature, and not in covenant with God or his church. So now, under the Christian economy, persons cannot be viewed as Christians, even ecclesiastically, who have not been baptized and consecrated to Christ. The notions of Mr. Draper and his brethren, on this point, are evidently most erroneous, and can afford not the shadow of an argument against Infant Baptism. In fact, 'the church of the Jews included the whole 'nation'—being, in a religious aspect, identical—simply because every individual in it was ritually consecrated to God. It was an identity arising solely from consecration and not from birth—just as a whole nation, county, or parish, of Gentiles might now be called Christian and constitute a Christian church, in the wide sense of those words, by every person in it being duly baptized and consecrated unto Christ. This matter will be further illustrated by the following observations.

QUESTION III.—*Were the Israelitish people a church at all, seeing they are never called so in the Old Testament, and only once so in the New?*—On the points involved in this question concise remarks have been given in a previous section. But, as it refers to matters of considerable interest in our present inquiry, as well as respecting the purity of the first Christian communions in general; I must recur to it at somewhat greater length.—It is thought we are not warranted in regarding the Hebrews in any other light than as a nation favoured with valuable religious privileges; while the term *church* means an assembly of regenerated, holy, and faithful men. Mr. Noel says, 'There was a church of God within 'that nation, as there are churches of Christ within England, 'France, India, and China; but Israel itself was no more the 'church than these nations are.' *Sub.* p. 143. In reply to this

assumption, allow me to observe, that though the Hebrew people, of both sexes, and of all ages, as separated from the surrounding nations, by circumcision and baptism to God, and especially as united in their great assemblies, are all but invariably called congregations in the English version of the Bible; the Greek version, in numerous instances, designates them *Ecclesiae*—the same word which, in the Greek New Testament, our translators have rendered churches, in nearly every instance. As the apostolic writers are known, and admitted, to have imitated the style of the Septuagint, in their discourses, gospels, and epistles, we are bound to conclude that the word *Ecclesia*—with occasional exceptions, which are easily distinguished—means about the same in the New Testament as in the Greek version of the Old. In the latter, it signifies an assembly of Jews, old and young, male and female; and, therefore, in the former—unless the connexion manifestly limit or modify its import—still signifies an assembly or congregation of professing Christian people, of both sexes, of all ages, and of different moral characters.

There is not the slightest intimation, given in the New Testament, that the inspired writers invariably or commonly employed the word *Ecclesia* in a sense essentially more limited or elevated than was attached to it in the version of the Seventy, with which they were familiar, and on the style of which they formed their own. Had the evangelists and apostles intended to express other ideas, and to describe differently constituted communities, words were not wanting, or unknown to them, adapted for that purpose. But the former terms were employed. Nor is this case singular. I am not aware that the language of the Septuagint is in any case perverted from its ancient ecclesiastical sense in the writings of the New Testament. The people that understood the language of the Greek Bible would equally understand the language of the Greek Testament. And it was to them, principally, that the latter was written and circulated by the inspired servants of Christ.

The perplexity of many of our opponents, respecting the Old Testament economy, is further manifest, from their viewing it as *only* a civil and political institution, and Jehovah, as only their civil and political governor, requiring only external obedience to his laws. Dr. Jenkins:—‘The Greek word *Ecclesia*, church, in the Old Testament, signifies only the ‘congregation, without any relation to religious matters at all. ‘This Greek word might be applied to Israel—as a body politic.

'It was a sort of church, to be members of which, and of the state, under God, their civil governor, were one and the same thing, a worldly church or congregation. *Def.* p. 52-56. Booth :—'To be an obedient subject to their civil government, and a complete member of their state church, were the same thing.' . . . 'Jehovah acknowledged all those for his people who performed an external obedience to his commands, even though in their hearts disaffected to him.' *Ib.* v. ii. p. 25, 152. Paice :—'The Jewish and Christian churches differed greatly one from the other. In the Jewish church, God accepted of external obedience merely ; but in the Christian church, he seeketh such to worship him, who worship him in spirit and in truth.' p. 19.

To these misrepresentations, Edwards forcibly replies, 'A civil governor, a political sovereign over a civil society, is the highest character the Baptists will grant the divine Being for fifteen hundred years' . . . He adds, 'The sum of all is, that, upon Baptist principles, the ancient church-state was political and diabolical—the blessed God was a mere civil governor—and that God was pleased with, and accepted of, pure hypocrisy.' . . . 'Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips ; but their heart is far from me.' *Crit. Rem.* p. 26, 27. The animus of the above representations of the ancient church is apparent—to destroy all fair analogy between that and the *Ecclesia* of the new dispensation. It is overlooked, that God required truth and holiness in all the Jews, as he does now in all Christians ; that in both communities there were the bad and the good ; that 'there was an Israel after the flesh, and an Israel after the Spirit.' *Carson*, p. 222 ; and that the like holds true among the first professors of the gospel ; and has done so in every intervening age.

In Tindale's translation of the New Testament, the author has invariably rendered the word *Ecclesia* by the word Congregation. It is also worthy of note, that, in *Cranmer's* Bible, the word *Ecclesia*, which is now translated church, is also uniformly rendered Congregation. And had our translators been left to act according to their own judgment, they, doubtless, would have followed this great Puritan's example ; and that they would have been justified in such a course, may be easily proved. Mr. Dore observes, 'When our common version was made in the reign of James I., he directed the translators to retain the old ecclesiastical words, as Church



‘for Congregation, Easter for Passover, and so on.’ p. 3. A quotation or two from Scripture will explain and confirm my view of the case. ‘If therefore the whole church—“*Ecclesia* ‘ole”—be come together in one place, and all speak with ‘tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or ‘unbelievers, will they not say they are mad?’ 1 Cor. xiv. 23. Here we see that the *Ecclesia* was not, what this modern phrase designates a ‘church meeting,’ composed of pious or presumed converted people only; but consisted of the assembly of professors of Christianity, met for public worship, open to all who liked to attend; or, in other words, a congregation, similar to our own.

In v. 22, the apostle says, the gift of tongues, exercised in such assemblies or churches, ‘was for a sign, not to them ‘that believe, but to them that believe not.’ In all such religious meetings, where these tongues were used, the ignorant and ungodly, and, indeed, any one, might be present, forming a part of the *Ecclesiae* or churches. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul says, ‘And when this epistle is read among ‘you, cause it to be read also in the *Ecclesia*, or church, of the ‘Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from ‘Laodicea.’ Col. iv. 16. That these epistles were to be read publicly in the congregation, to all assembled together to receive instruction, correction, and consolation, and not to a small company of pious and select Christian friends, few will question. Besides, there were expositions, reproofs, and directions given in them, which could apply only to persons whose characters and conduct evidently indicate that they were not truly and spiritually converted to God, though they constituted a portion of the regular and, probably, of the baptized congregation.

It can scarcely be imagined that the sacred doctrines, precepts, warnings, and promises, contained in the Pauline Epistles—though expressly directed ‘to the saints and faithful ‘brethren’—‘to all the saints in Christ Jesus’—and ‘to the ‘faithful in Christ Jesus’—were to be withheld from all other people; that they were not to hear them; and who yet, most probably, constituted a considerable part of the congregation gathered together for the express purpose of being instructed out of them. The identity of the terms church, and congregation, in these places, is hardly questionable, nor will the reader be surprised at this when he learns that the word *Ecclesia*—mostly rendered church, in our version of the New Testament—should not only occasionally or frequently mean a pro-

miscuous congregation of religious worshippers, but also an assembly or riotous mob, (Acts xix. 23); a bench of Magistrates, (v. 29); and, in the Septuagint, 'a congregation of evil doers. Ps. xxvi. 5. The term *Ecclesia* occurs in the Greek Old Testament about sixty-four times. Our translators, if I have counted accurately, have rendered it *company* once, *assembly* five-times, and *congregation* fifty-eight. The term *Synagoge*, which appears to have been regarded as synonymous with *Ecclesia*, occurs in the same Scriptures about one hundred and twenty times, and is rendered *assembly* four times, *company* eight times, and *congregation* one hundred and eight times. We may, hence, safely infer, how the New Testament writers understood these words, and also how they were likely, and even necessitated, to use them in their discourses, narratives, and epistles, in order to be understood by their hearers and readers—for companies, assemblies, or congregations—whether of a promiscuous gathering, or of a select class of persons—and which of these being determined by the connexion in which the words are found.

In addressing the Corinthians, the apostle says, in language previously cited, 'Lest, when I come again, my God may humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness, which they have committed.' 2 Cor. xii. 21. When designating this people, 'The church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia;' could the inspired writer mean to say, or to imply, by these general terms, that in the *Ecclesia*, or congregation, at Corinth, there were no persons manifestly destitute of genuine piety and love to the Saviour of mankind? This, surely, could never have been the intention of Paul, whose zeal for the purity of Christian fellowship is everywhere apparent; nor could it be the sense which the people would assign to his language. He was not the man to confound the precious with the vile, the real children of God with impenitent profligates; or to designate wicked and adulterous people, the spiritual saints of the Lord, holy and dearly beloved—to the delusion and destruction of their souls!

Conybeare and Howson observe.—'The twofold character of this [second] 'epistle,' [to the Corinthians, and which equally applies to the first] 'is easily explained by the existence of the majority and minority which we have described in the Corinthian church' [or congregation].

‘Towards the former, the epistle overflows with love ; towards the latter, it abounds with warning and menace. The purpose of the apostle was to encourage and tranquilize the great body of the church’ [or congregation] ; ‘but, at the same time, he was constrained to maintain his authority against those who persisted in despising the commands of Christ delivered by his mouth. . . . This twofold character pervades the whole epistle.’ vol. ii. p. 112.

Let us take one of our general congregations, not selecting that most eminent for purity and quietude ; and describe the members of it as faithfully as the sacred writer has done the churches at Corinth and Galatia ; and there can hardly be a doubt, that the modern Baptist or Independent congregation would appear more pure and peaceable than the general congregations in Corinth and Galatia—leaving their inner churches out of the question. Paul’s description of those assemblies accords with the character of a mixed assembly, and not with that of a holy internal fellowship of the saints, even in its lowest condition. Nor will the inscription of his epistle be found essentially different from that which a good minister of the gospel now commonly employs in addressing his promiscuous congregation, as his dear ‘Christian friends,’ or his ‘beloved brethren.’ There is hardly a Baptist preacher in the country but adopts the like style of speech, notwithstanding Mr. Noel’s horror at hearing people ‘called Christians, when living in known sin.’

Further, when addressing the Almighty in solemn prayer and thanksgiving, before a general assembly, in the house of God, the Baptist minister, and, probably, every other, speaks to Jehovah in the name of all of them, as though all were devout and uniting in the supplications and praise he offers ; implores God’s blessing upon his people before him, and blesses him for the mercies bestowed upon all his people present. Nor can the preacher easily conduct public worship without adopting such a mode of address to God, or to his congregation. These being facts which admit of no valid refutation ; let us suppose that, wherever the word *Ecclesia* or *Synagogue* occurs in the Greek Bible, it had been rendered *church* ; or that wherever found in the Greek Testament, it had been translated *congregation* ; or, rather, that, throughout both Testaments, it had been uniformly rendered either church or congregation ; how materially would it have modified the opinions of many, if not of most, persons respecting the question of Infant Baptism ? And that such a uniformity of translation of the originals might

have been adopted, the foregoing observations have rendered tolerably manifest—at least, Tindale and Cranmer were of this judgment.

An American divine says, ‘In looking into the New Testament, we find that the term church, when first introduced, is used without explanation, in a way that shows it to have been quite familiar to the people of that time. Matt. xvi. 13. “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” &c. *Ib.* xviii. 17. “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” It seems manifest from this phraseology that the word church conveyed no new idea to the disciples of our Saviour. This appears, too, from the words of Stephen (Acts vii. 38,) “This is he that was *in the church* in the wilderness.” In fact, the Greek word rendered *church* (*ecclesia*) corresponds with the Hebrew term *KAL*, rendered *congregation*, and occurring so frequently, that an enumeration of the passages would be tedious. And the English phrase, *Church of God*, is a literal rendering of the Greek, *Ecclesia Theou*; which is, again, a literal translation of the Hebrew *KAL JEHOVAH*. In fact, a great part of the phraseology of the New Testament, is derived from the *Old*, and it is impossible to read many passages of the former intelligibly, without an intimate acquaintance with the latter. The complex idea conveyed by the word church, cannot be adequately understood without reference to the Old Scriptures. This will appear strange to those who have taken up the opinion, that the church was organized by our Saviour when on earth. That this is not true, follows from what has been said.’ *Pamphleteer*, p. 13, 14.

The foregoing views may be confirmed by a reference to the *Ecclesiae*, the churches or congregations, in Galatia. Paul says, ‘As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,’—we will suppose, by water-baptism. Thence, it is argued, that Paul would not have said this of whom he could not declare, ‘He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.’ Yet, Mr. Parsons justly remarks, ‘The epistle furnishes little evidence to prove, that every one of them was of one mind with Christ, or had been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Paul broadly intimates that they were bewitched—that they were disobeying the truth; that they were so foolish as to expect perfection from the flesh and from the works of the law; that what they had suffered they had suffered in vain;



‘that they were turned again to weak and beggarly elements; ‘that by observing days, and months, and times, and years, ‘they were being reduced to a state of bondage; that they ‘accounted the apostle an enemy, because he told them the ‘truth; that he had travailed again in birth for them, until ‘Christ should be formed in them; that he stood in doubt of ‘them, and would change his voice to them. He as good as ‘testifies, that they had fallen from grace, and that Christ ‘was become of none effect to them; that they were now ‘biting and devouring one another.’ p. 18.

That these persons were in the congregations of Galatia is manifest, because Paul addresses them as members of them; and that they had been baptized into them, our opponents will not care or venture to deny. Those who would contend, that the term church, in the New Testament, is always used in the restricted sense, implied in Mr. Noel’s statement, quoted above, will have some difficulty in showing that the communion of saints, in apostolic times, was equally pure with our own; for, surely, we should soon expel such persons, as the apostle so vividly portrays, from our spiritual societies. Yet, the same respected opponent says, ‘Since ‘our Lord has said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall ‘be saved,” (Mark xvi. 16,) and these Corinthians believed ‘and were baptized, they were, therefore, saved. There is no ‘more reason to give the lowest sense to the word “believed,” ‘in this narrative, than there is to give it to the same word ‘in Mark xvi; and, therefore, there is no reason to doubt ‘that these persons were true believers before baptism.’ p. 85. Of course, he means all of them—all believed, and were all saved: or he means nothing with the paper he wrote on. Were he to explain the passage in Mark by the manifest character of the believers at Corinth, he would evidently approximate much nearer the sense of the language employed by our divine Instructor.

The truth evidently is, that *Ecclesia*, like many other words, has a larger and a less application. Referring to the Hebrews in the broad sense, it embraced them all, because all were separated from the heathens around them, and consecrated to the Lord, by circumcision and baptism. In its narrower sense, it would include those who were the people of God by a new birth, and who also manifested it by living to his glory. Referring to Christians, it would embrace all the baptized people in Christendom, or any collected body of people professing the Christian faith, instead of gentilism; or a

congregation of people, large or small, where the means of grace are conducted, and in which all, who were inclined, might assemble; or, in a still more spiritual sense, a communion or fellowship of truly pious people, assumed to be regenerated by divine grace, among whom the Lord's Supper was administered, more or less frequently. This last is the church of Christ in the purest import of the term. In this high and special sense, the word is occasionally used in the New Testament; which may be readily discovered by carefully examining the context—as, 'the church or congregation' 'which Christ has bought with his own blood; the church of' 'the first-born written in heaven; Christ loved the church' 'and gave himself for it; that he might present to himself' 'a glorious church; he is head of the body the church; for' 'his body's sake, which is the church,' and the like. And, yet, the substitution of the word *congregation*, for the word *church*, in the above, and most other places, sounds somewhat strange and unorthodox, in ears so long accustomed to a different form of speech. But the redeemed and renewed of the Lord are distinguished, not so much by the application of the word *church* to them, as by designating them, 'holy' 'brethren,' 'the communion of saints,' 'faithful and true,' 'the chosen,' 'the beloved,' 'my sheep,' 'my lambs,' and similar appellations.

To belong to the church or congregation, in the larger sense, nothing was essential, but induction, by undergoing baptism with water—such as was administered in the Red Sea. To become real members of the church or congregation, in its more limited sense, the parties were assumed to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. In the former case, spiritual piety was not necessarily requisite; in the latter, it became professedly essential. In the former case, the parties took their station as inquirers and learners; in the latter, they were elevated to the position of perfect and complete Christians, being no longer tyros or novices, but young men and fathers in Christ Jesus. From the court of the people, they ascended to that of the priests, in their way to the holiest of all—in heaven.

Byron says, 'God's church is composed only of the sheep' 'of Christ, whom he gave himself to redeem.' p. 132. This is true; but then, the term church here must be employed in its limited sense, and not in that general application of it, so frequent in the Word of God. Carson says, 'The constitution' 'of the Jewish church recognized the membership of carnal

‘persons.’ p. 233. Had the writer employed the term congregation, or the word church, in its general or original sense, he would have stated the truth. But, the same may be said of the congregations or churches of the New Testament—regarding the expressions in that broad sense, in which it is mostly employed by its inspired authors. The inner churches, congregations, or societies, however, of neither economies avowedly or purposely regarded carnal, worldly, or ungodly persons, as true members. Few things tend more to mislead the popular mind, in matters of religion, than an erroneous nomenclature. And our opponents are evidently misguided by miscalling some of the leading facts, points, and actions, involved in the question of Christian baptism.

Our view of the subject is analogous to cases of daily occurrence in civil and social life. The conditions on which an alien may become an ordinary citizen, and enjoy the usual privileges pertaining to such a position, are different from those which must be observed before he can become a member of the corporate body, chosen to manage the affairs of the population. While, therefore, our principles and practice open wide the door to Christian privileges—particularly to those of religious instruction—by water-baptism; they, at the same time, tend to preserve, as much as human care can do it, the purity, peace, rights, and usefulness, of our particular or select churches, societies, or fellowships, of genuine and spiritual Christians. This latter is confessedly done among the friends of Infant Baptism, as effectually as among the advocates of adult immersion, and that, too, in perfect agreement with the plans of the first churches of Jesus Christ. We do not mix up the members of the general church or congregation of professors with the especial church or congregation of holy and devoted believers, any more than do our pious and respected opponents, though adopting the practice of adult and believers’ baptism.

That the inner or select churches or congregations of the apostolic age differed from the outer churches or congregations, into which the unbelieving and ungodly were freely admitted, and with which they were identified, as hearers of the word, and the witnesses of miracles, of tongues, and of other divine demonstrations of heavenly powers, we may readily gather from the care taken by the apostles to make and keep the former pure. He denounces a curse on any one who should preach another gospel from what he himself delivered by divine inspiration. So much for the pulpit. The excommu-

nication of a heretic, after two or three admonitions, is enjoined; and the withdrawal from every brother that walked disorderly, is commanded, not, surely, in respect of the means of grace—except for present and outrageous misconduct—but in reference to spiritual fellowship. Could he, then, have regarded those obnoxious people—though baptized—as being truly converted by the grace of God, as suitable members of Christ's mystical body? Would he have introduced such into it at first, or have willingly retained them afterwards, when their true character was discovered? Assuredly not. Nor would our evangelical Baptist brethren knowingly receive such erring and troublesome people into their select churches; or if, on subsequently discovering their erroneous notions and sinful conduct, would they suffer them to remain—like spots in their feasts of charity? We believe not. Yet, that such were in the general or baptized churches or congregations of Corinth and Galatia, and, probably, in some of the rest, is proved to a demonstration.

Mr. Noel says, 'Those are ordered in the word of God to 'be excluded from the communion of saints, who are heretical 'in doctrine, (Gal. v. 12,) who are vicious in their practice, '(1 Cor. v. 11, 13,) who are schismatical in temper, (Rom. 'xvi. 17,) who injure their brethren, (Matt. xviii. 17,) or who 'are openly disobedient to the commands of Christ, (2 Thess. 'iii. 14.' *Sub.* p. 312. Hence, it is manifest, that the inner congregation at Corinth should have been pure; while it is equally plain, that the outer congregation was morally corrupt. Have we any valid reasons for believing that these churches or congregations were identical? How apparently inappropriate to a spiritual inner church of God at Corinth, of whom Paul's hope was steadfast, is the following admonition:—'Come out 'from among'—the unbelievers, the unrighteous, the children of darkness, the sons of Belial, the heathenish idolators—'and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean 'thing, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my 'sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. But, suppose it to be addressed to a mixed congregation of worshippers, and, then, all is consistent. Unless Mr. Noel's description of church members applies to all the primitive hearers of the gospel, there must have been another and a larger association of people, to whom the word of God was statedly spoken; and who, in conjunction with those previously converted by divine grace, must have constituted the general or outer church or congregation of Christian



hearers or worshippers of God. In truth, our distinction between the nominal and spiritual Christian ; between the mere professor, and the real possessor, of vital religion ; between being in the general and in the particular churches ; are points recognized as clearly, and admitted as fully, by our Baptist brethren, in their ordinary books and publications, as by ourselves. In truth, it is never questioned nor denied, except when deemed necessary to frame an argument against the doctrine and rite of Infant Baptism.

That the above distinction is not novel or singular, may be seen in the following passage of Dr. Lathrop, in his ‘Church of God Described :’—‘The church in Corinth was that number of persons who had come out from among their idolatrous fellow-citizens for the true worship of God in Christ. The apostle describes them “as sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints.” We cannot suppose that, by this description, he intended to represent *all* the members of the Corinthian Church to be *gracious, godly* persons ; many passages in this and his second epistle to them, import that he thought otherwise. But these phrases rather signify, that they had been called out of the world, and separated from others, that they might be a peculiar people to God. *They were called to be holy.* The words *sanctified, saints,* and *holy*, applied to bodies of men, are usually to be taken in the same general sense, as *Christians, disciples,* and *brethren* ; to express their visible relation and *professed* character, rather than a certain judgment concerning their habitual temper. . . . The word *saints*, in many places, stands opposed, not to unsound Christians, but to the heathen world, particularly in the passages which speak of persecution against the *saints*, of ministry to the *saints*, and of distributing to the necessities of the *saints* ; and in that remarkable passage which denominates the children of a believer *holy*, in distinction from the unbelieving, who are called unclean. . . . By the visible church, are meant all those who have been visibly dedicated to God in Christ, and have not, by infidelity, heresy, or scandal, cut themselves off from the society of Christians.’ p. 4.

Nor is this idea of recent origin. Mr. Wills, 180 years ago, says, ‘The apostle calls the churches *saints*, either as looking upon them all as such, *i.e.* truly regenerate ; for this is the *famosius significatum* of the word saint. But this could not be, for he pointed at some that were sad saints in the church at Corinth and Galatia. Or else he calls

'them saints synecdochically, because he judgeth the most of them to be such, and so the whole communion were 'judged saints, *a portiori*, from the better part.' p. 78. As the prophet said of the Jews, we may say of the churches at Corinth and Galatia, and, probably, of some others, 'Among my people are found wicked men.' Jer. v. 26. Mr. Tombes had previously said, a congregation is called 'a church of believers, from the greater or most eminent part, though the rest be neither actually nor virtually believers.' *Exam.* p. 38. Conybeare and Howson, on the word 'saints,' in 1 Cor. i. 1, remark—'The sense of *hagioi*, in the New Testament, is 'equivalent to the modern [word] Christians. . . . The English reader should bear in mind, that St. Paul applies the term to all members of the church,' [or congregation]. Calmet says, 'Saints is sometimes put for the people of Israel; sometimes for Christians. . . . But, it is probably never given to any, after the promulgation of the gospel, who had not been baptized.' *In loc.* And, doubtless, all the baptized had this designation, which means the persons set apart, sanctified, or consecrated to Christianity.

In our ecclesiastical phraseology we, from custom, use two words where the original writers of the New Testament use only one. We employ one word to express the general audience, and another the select fellowship of our people. The former we call a *congregation*, and the latter a *church*. But the New Testament contains one term only, to designate both of them. Now, it is plain, that if the word *Ecclesia* signify exclusively the communion of Saints, or only the spiritually regenerated believers in Christ; then it has no distinct term for a congregation of promiscuous hearers—answering to our open assemblies of worshippers, which, of necessity, the first Christians had equally with ourselves. This fact, at first sight, may present a difficulty; but it is apparent rather than real, at least, to a thoughtful student of the Scriptures—and no other should expect to understand them. The word Israel, in one application, included all the Jews, in another only the holy and devout among them. As seen before, the word saints, or the sanctified, may distinguish the truly regenerated, or comprehend all the baptized into Christ. So the word congregation may signify all the attendants on our ministry; or only a select company of spiritual Christians. The term assembly may express a promiscuous gathering of individuals, and a select number of persons met for a more spiritual communion. The connexion of the word

readily determines its specific application. This is the case with *Ecclesia*. And whether it signify what we, from custom, mostly call a congregation, or a church, must be gathered from the connexion—as must also be the case with most words of a similar character. One thing is certain, that if this term signify only a select body of true believers and disciples indeed; the New Testament *has no other* to designate a general congregation, which we know must have existed in all places where the gospel was publicly preached. Unless all the promiscuous hearers of the gospel, good and bad, for the first or the fiftieth time, were admitted into spiritual fellowship, and were entitled to all the honours and privileges of the regenerate and godly, even to partake of the Lord's Supper, whenever it was administered in their locality, to vote in all religious affairs, and exercise the like authority in every spiritual concern—which neither we nor our opponents believe.

Dr. F. Cox, in replying to Dr. Wardlaw, says, 'Dr. W. has not adduced a single passage in all his citations, and *never can produce one*, in which the sense of the term *church*, as a protestant dissenter, is applied to the nation of 'Israel.' p. 153. But Stephen says, 'This is he that was *in the church*, [*Ecclesia*] in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them.' Acts vii. 39, 40. Here the words, 'Our Fathers,' certainly signify 'the nation of Israel,' as we have previously shown. And these are distinctly called 'the church.' Long before, what our opponents call, a Christian church was formed, our Lord speaks of 'the church,' as the object of ultimate appeal in cases of a brother's violation of his moral or religious obligation. Matt. xviii. 17. Here is the recognition of a congregation, assembly, or church of God, under the former dispensation. The term *Ecclesia*, rendered church, in the New Testament, is employed in the Greek Bible to express the nation of Israel in many instances, and is mostly translated congregation in our version of the Old Testament. Let the reader now judge whether Dr. Cox was not too rash in his assertion, that such a passage could never be produced.

But his 'statement is fallacious.' Protestant dissenters, the most earnest and consistent, not excepting even our good Baptist friends themselves, can readily distinguish between a general and a particular church; the one composed of the

baptized generally, and the other of the spiritually converted; the *ecclesia* in its large, and in its limited, senses; the assembly of worshippers, and the hopefully renewed communicants. In return, it may be safely averred, that our opponents cannot produce half as many passages in the Greek Scriptures, where the word *Ecclesia*, rendered church, is used for a select society of only regenerated and godly believers, as we can others, in which it is evidently employed to distinguish those who were simply named Christians, or the general worshippers of God. Mr. Hall says, 'The term church is merely a numerical term, denoting a multitude 'or an assembly of men; and for the 'same reason that a number of men meeting together constitute 'an assembly, or *church*. Acts xix. 32. "For the assembly 'was confused." . . . The original is *Ecclesia*, the term usually 'rendered *church*, in the most comprehensive import of the 'word; so a number of Christians, convened for the worship of 'God, constitute a Christian assembly or a church.' p. 76.

As previously remarked, the Greek terms *Synagoge* and *Ecclesia* are used synonymously in the Septuagint; and would, of course, be so regarded by the Jewish writers of the New Testament. The word congregation occurs about 166 times in the English version of the Old Testament. It is the rendering of the Greek term *Synagoge* 108 times, and of *Ecclesia* 58. The accordance of these may, therefore, be fairly assumed. In the Greek New Testament, the same words occur frequently—*Ecclesia* 115 times and *Synagoge* 57. The sense and application of this latter term is well known. It means a congregation, open to all properly conducted people, disposed to attend the services administered in them, not excluding Gentiles; yet, for the most part, composed of Israelites. Though the word *Ecclesia* is more frequently employed by the New Testament writers than *Synagoge*, it is highly probable the Jewish converts to Christianity were accustomed to assemble in them for Christian worship whenever they had the opportunity—the first Christians having no separate places of worship of their own. In Heb. x. 28, Paul commands them not to forget to come together as in a synagogue (*Gr.*) for divine service. James (ii. 2) says, 'If 'there come into your assembly' (synagogue) or place of meeting. Mr. Scott explains this expression, 'When they 'were met for the worship of God, as the Jews did in their 'synagogues.' Whitby remarks, 'The Jewish Christians still 'assembled in the Jewish synagogues, and both the judges 'and the judgment seats might belong to the rulers of the



‘synagogue ; nor do I think there were then any other church assemblies among the Jews.’

Barnes observes, ‘This word is probably employed here because the apostle was writing to those who had been Jews ; and it is to be presumed that the word *synagogue* would be naturally used by the early converts from Judaism to designate a Christian place of worship, or a congregation ; and it was probably so employed until it was superseded by a word which the gentile converts would be more likely to employ, and that would, in fact, be better, and more expressive, of the word *church*....It is probable, that the Christian church was modelled, in its general arrangements, after the Jewish synagogue.’ *In loc.*—Now, it is plain, that if the first Christian assemblies were like those of the Hebrew synagogues, our preceding views are confirmed beyond all valid refutation. The terms *Ecclesia* and *Synagoge* being synonymous, the early converts to Christianity being Jews, and no novel method of worship being appointed, the conclusion is fair, if not inevitable, that what we call the church or congregation of Christians, was after the manner of the synagogues or assemblies of Israel.

The Rev. Matt. Henry justly discriminates on this interesting point:—‘Baptism is an ordinance of Christ, whereby the person baptized is solemnly admitted a member of the visible church....not of the *invisible* church (as it is called), *the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven*, but the visible church ; comprehending all that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him. Many are baptized, and so taken into that number, who yet remain in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. Witness Simon Magus. ....Baptism is an ordinance of the visible church ; appointed for the admission of visible church members : admission, not into the internal communion, but only into that which is visible and external, in the profession of faith ; that is, into the general congregation.’ p. 25, 26. After a careful examination of this matter, I believe that the terms, *Ecclesia* and *Ecclesiae*, nearly always translated church or churches, and which, as said before, occur about one hundred and fifteen times in the Greek Testament ; the sense of them, in about ninety instances, is that of a mixed congregation or assembly of Christian professors, or general hearers of the gospel, among whom the ordinances of preaching, prayer, and praise, were conducted, as among ourselves in the present day. In a few places reference is made to people

assembled for the transaction of secular affairs. The remainder refer to the communion of saints, spiritual worshippers, the renewed and the redeemed, who believed with the heart, and lived unto God. If the reader will take a Greek and English Concordance of the New Testament, and carefully examine every text, I think he will find that my conclusions are not far from the truth. Though, of course, the precise proportions in the application of the term is comparatively immaterial to my argument.

The seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. ii. and iii), offer us a fair exposition, and a full confirmation, of the distinction previously made between the large and the limited, the general and the particular, use of the term *Ecclesia*. Suppose the word *Church*, in the headings of the seven epistles to the seven congregations, comprehended all who usually or occasionally met together in one place to worship God, or the people who nominally professed Christianity, as distinguished from heathenism, in each of these cities; then the case is clear and accordant with what constantly meets our observation. Many motives might have induced the worst persons mentioned in these letters to attach themselves to the Christian assemblies of these Asiatic cities, and to constitute a part of the *Ecclesiae*, or congregations. But, suppose the word church meant, what we usually understand by the term, an assembly of pious, faithful, and divinely regenerated people; what a scene is represented before us! Church members, some that love God, and some that hate him; some really pertaining to the communion of saints, and others belonging to the synagogue of Satan; some holding the doctrines of the cross, and others the doctrines of Balaam; some that were spiritually chaste virgins, and others utterly seduced by that woman Jezabel; some alive to God, and others dead in sin; some enriched with spiritual gifts and graces, and others wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked! What incongruous and conflicting elements have we here—in this fellowship of the faithful, this society of believers!

But suppose, that, in these seven cities, there were select assemblies, congregations or churches, however limited, within the general ones; then all our difficulties vanish. Give correct renderings to the titles of the epistles. Read, 'to the angel, messenger, or minister of the congregation of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos,' &c.—and all is accordant with our views of such promiscuous gatherings. Doubtless, in each of these congregations there were some devout, evan-

gelical, and righteous people, walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. These would form the fellowship of the saints, would speak often one to another, and commune at the table of the Lord. These would really constitute the inner, select, elect churches of Christ. Indeed, in two or three of the epistles themselves, the distinction, I contend for, is observed, as in that to the church of Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis. And this, unquestionably, was but a fair representation of the whole. There was combination without communion.

The point I am aiming to establish respecting the difference between the general and the spiritual churches of Christ, may be further confirmed by the following quotation from Eaton :— ‘ If any sort of baptism was employed to *proselyte* or *initiate* a family, a tribe, a *race* into Judaism ; will it or can it perform the same office as to Christianity ? ‘ If a whole people, young and old, ignorant and informed, virtuous and vicious, (including in them, too, successive generations,) could be received into the Jewish church, or rather Jewish nation ; does it follow, that such can be, or ought to be, received into the Christian— we mean the real, the *pure Christian church*, or church of *Christ*—that church of which he, and he alone, without vicegerent, partner, or rival, is the sole head, the only Lord ? ‘ If baptism could make mere infants’ Jews, can baptism make mere infants Christians, in the proper acceptation of the name or designation ? It may be said by a common abuse of words, (than which no *entities* are more absurd,) that new-born infants are *christened*, and that they receive their *Christian* name by a ceremony with water, be it immersion, affusion, or sprinkling : but will this ceremony—can this ceremony—constitute the poor, passive, unconscious babes, real or living members of that intellectual, moral, and spiritual church, which is spoken of in the New Testament as the body of Christ, because he is its intellectual and moral and spiritual head ? ’ p. 142. This Baptist writer is here describing, in very precise phraseology, the society of genuine Christians ; and, in doing so, is compelled to employ terms, in conjunction with the word church, exalting it to a far higher sense than it generally conveys to the ordinary reader of the English New Testament. But into this church, thus refined and elevated, no child is ever baptized. And, consequently, his indignation, at our supposed inconsistency, is intirely misdirected and lost.

That shortly after the work of proselyting and conversion to Christ commenced, the distinction I have made, between

the general and the particular *Ecclesia* or congregation, really took place, our opponents believe equally with ourselves; and so do most other Christian denominations. Their practice, in this matter, expounds their faith. The precise time, reason, and modes of this separation of the professing disciples into classes, are not mentioned in the New Testament. Doubtless, like the office of deacons, it originated in a religious necessity, and was designed for spiritual advantage. As the ancient synagogues arose at the unrecorded command of God, for the benefit of the Jews; so, I apprehend, the formation of churches within churches was enjoined by inspired apostles, for the good of the saints—though we have no definite account of its being done. That there was an Israel within the ancient Israel was well known; and that those who feared the Lord spake often one to another, in select and solemn fellowships, in former ages, the early disciples had full information. The congregating of the more devoted followers of the crucified Redeemer, in upper rooms, for secret converse and social prayer, was a spontaneous act. When the hearers and adherents of Christianity were greatly multiplied, embracing—like the net of the fishermen—people of all kinds, the truly pious and spiritually-minded would naturally seek occasions to meet separately from the rest, for converse, communion, and more secret worship. The sheep, the little flock, would, at stated times, separate from the goats, and form a sacred fold of themselves. The serious, the deeply impressed, the people of special kindred sympathies, of genuine faith, ardent love to Christ, and those particularly interested in the cause of holiness, would endeavour to meet apart, to tell one another what God had done for their souls; would speak of joys, hopes, and fears, with which the promiscuous audiences could not experimentally intermingle. From such holy reunions others would be excluded, until they gave hope or evidence of having undergone similar mental renovations, and of being under similar holy influences. This inner congregation would soon be recognized as a special fellowship, possessing more wisdom, virtue, and grace, than those who were without; and, as a rational consequence, would be consulted on all affairs of interest and importance, and ultimately have the chief management of the cause voluntarily submitted to their direction.

What now takes place, in all sects and religious assemblies, would early, though, perhaps, gradually, have taken place among the adherents of the gospel. The genuine partizans of



distinctive principles mostly constitute the members or fellows of particular societies; and the cordial adherents of special creeds join in distinctive brotherhoods. So, at first, the inner church or congregation, duly organized, was essential to the proper exhibition of Christianity, and would, doubtless, be universally instituted by the spiritual converts to Christ. Imagine our general congregations being viewed as the exponents of the principles and piety of the sanctified people of God; specially in our missionary stations! The like incongruities would, in a great measure, have been the same in primitive times. The baptized proselytes, and the devoted saints, must have presented very different aspects to the world at large. The after failure, to preserve the inner fellowship pure, was one of the most fearful evils that ever befel the cause of Christ. When the unclean entered the society of the holy; when those that feared not God took their places in the assembly, and at the table, of elect believers; and when the heretic gave his suffrage with the orthodox; ills befel the Christian cause, the consequences of which, in all their malignity, have come down to the present day, and have spread their baleful influence throughout, what we call, the Christian world. Let us endeavour to preserve the church within the church pure as possible; and our evils, however many and heavy, will not materially injure the heart of our respective fellowships. The above explanation appears to me to be natural, reasonable, and true; and accounts for the distinction between the general and the particular communions to which I have alluded. It may also show, in some degree, how it occurred, that only one word, *ecclesia* or *synagoge*, assembly, congregation, or church, was originally used to designate two separate classes of Christians, or rather two distinct degrees of Christian attainments.

I may here notice the remark of Mr. Scott. He says, 'We admit, indeed, that the word' [*Ecclesia*, church] 'did not include the whole population of a city or country; for there was no establishment of any kind. But if some extend the word too largely, others narrow it much more than accords with Scripture: and Independents' [including their Baptist brethren], 'restrict it to the communicants, to the exclusion of most of the congregation.' *Works*, vol. ix., p. 571. Had the writer subjoined, that the communicants constituted a fellowship, society, or *Ecclesia*, within the congregation, he would have conveyed the idea for which I am contending. He would have also shown that the practice

of most modern Christian denominations accords with the procedure of the first apostolical churches. This practice is found absolutely necessary now in carrying out the manifest design of Christ, in preaching to the promiscuous multitude, in training up the novitiates, and in preserving the purity of Christian communion. And the same design would have required the like arrangements in ancient as in recent times. In fact, wherever a fellowship is perpetuated by proselytism, two classes of persons must be recognized; the candidates, the novitiates, or the catechumens, on the one hand; and the initiated, the full members, or the perfect, on the other. From the larger assembly a lesser must be elected. From a great congregation a small one may be chosen. From the *Ecclesia* of general worshippers, a particular *Ecclesia* of communicants may be gathered. This is the case now, and necessarily so; and such must have been the case when the gospel was preached to all characters and classes; and when saints, or faithfuls, or converts, were formed into separate or distinct associations.

It will now be readily seen, that children might be introduced to the outer or general church by baptism, without being regarded as members of the inner society or church, in its more limited sense; and also that our practice does not, in the least degree, affect the purity of what we understand by the phrase 'Christian communion;' as theoretically held by all evangelical protestant dissenters. Indeed, we regard our views and reasonings as the only ones calculated to vindicate the early churches against the charge of being corrupt, and our own against departing from the apostolical models. The mistakes of our opponents, on this point, originate in erroneously regarding the word church, as embracing only and always truly regenerate persons, instead of viewing it as *also* and mostly indicating a larger circle—comprehending all that are separated to Christianity from the ranks of the heathen, or from the unbaptized people of the world generally. By their reasonings in this matter, their communions can assume nothing in purity over our own; and we know that, practically, the inner churches of Pedobaptists are not a whit behind those of their opponents in the virtues and excellencies of their elected constituents.

Though some of our opponents, perceiving the bearing of our present distinction—between the outer and the inner communions in the apostolic fellowships—on the subject of Infant Baptism, and in defence of our practice, may object

to some of my testimonies and deductions, they cannot consistently deny the fact, that such a distinction really existed. They all profess to have founded their own churches on the model of those constituted by the inspired followers of Christ. These are divided into two parts, the outer and the inner fellowships, the general worshippers and the elect communicants, the greater and the less congregations, or the *Ecclesia* in its large and limited sense. Their authority for this division is either present expediency, or primitive example; either a sagacious arrangement or a divine precedent. As they will certainly and readily deny that this important ecclesiastical measure is the result of their own invention; they must admit that it is according to the revealed will of God, or the example of the apostolical communions,—and so confirm the verity of our statements and inferences. If they are right in practice, we are right in argument; and they cannot aver that we are wrong in argument, without conceding that they are wrong in practice. Not only so, it must be concluded, that all the churches of scriptural protestantism, if not in Christendom, are wrong, provided we are not right; for all of them have professedly, if not practically, churches within churches, societies within societies; or select communions within general ones. Let me also add, that, supposing the constitution of the Baptist persuasions to be scriptural and proper, in the case under consideration, they base it on inference, rather than on any clear precept or manifest examples—as they do many other matters in their opinions and religious proceedings.

I will now conclude my extended reply to the important question under review, in the words of Dr. Dwight:—‘If baptized infants are members of the Christian church, we are bound to determine and declare the nature and extent of their membership. That they are members of the church, I believe. All persons are baptized not *in* but *into* the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that is, they are introduced into the family of God, and are called *godly*, *Christians*, *spiritual*, *sons and daughters of God*, throughout the Scriptures. All persons baptized, therefore, are members of the Christian church. Still, they are not members in the sense commonly intended by these terms. The word *church* has various significations; denoting the *invisible* kingdom of Christ, consisting of all who are *sanctified*—the *visible* kingdom, consisting of all who have publicly professed religion, and their baptized offspring—*any body of Christ*—

'ians, holding the same doctrines, and united in the same 'worship and discipline—and Christians who worship together 'in the *same place*. Hence, when persons baptized in 'infancy, are said to be members of the church, the word 'cannot be used in all these senses, and, therefore, something 'beside baptism, or a profession of religion, is necessary 'to constitute a membership of any particular church.' *Lect. 157.*

QUESTION IV.—*Was not Jewish Circumcision every way inferior to, and essentially different from, Christian Baptism?*—I propose this question, and shall endeavour to answer it, not because the topic much or immediately concerns the specific argument in hand; but, in order to state and meet certain allegations usually brought against Infant Baptism, when based upon the covenant of circumcision, as is done by many Pedobaptist writers; and to show, that even their foundation is too solid to be destroyed by what our opponents usually adduce against it. As Mr. Noel has dwelt very largely and emphatically on this point—having summed up all his brethren have advanced upon it—I shall confine my remarks chiefly to his various observations. He says, 'Circumcision 'was enjoined on all the descendants of Jacob, and their 'servants, whether they were godly or ungodly; baptism was 'offered to no adults except regenerate believers.' p. 184. On what authority does Mr. Noel assume, that the grown-up household of Abraham (for they only can be meant) were ungodly, or that even any of them were so, according to the light they enjoyed? That the father of the faithful was attentive to the piety of his family, we may well suppose; and, probably, great blessings attended his labours, 'For I 'know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to 'do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon 'Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' Gen. xviii. 19; see also Ps. ci. 4-7.

If it cannot be proved, that his immediate adult household were ungodly, in the general sense of that word; it would be strange to call the little descendants of Abraham himself, or of his servants, ungodly at eight days old; 'for of such was 'the kingdom of God,' then as well as now. And none but such were, as a general rule, to be circumcised after the introduction of this rite into the household of Abraham. As to 'baptism being offered to no adults, except to *regenerate* 'believers;' where does the writer find this doctrine in the



word of God? Grown-up men must have some belief, before they will accept the invitation to baptism. But to assert, that the call was limited to the regenerated, is to speak without the divine book. I have said that no Hebrews, in a general way, were to be circumcised, but infants of eight days old. The only exception occurred on the tribes entering the Holy Land, under the conduct of Joshua. Then, probably, some hundreds of thousands of males, from eight days, to nearly forty years, old, underwent this rite. And, as far as age was concerned, there was no distinction made between the people, any more than there was in the baptism in the Red Sea, forty years before; or in the baptismal purifications under the law of Moses. And, here, it is observable, that many, if not most, of the adults, previously baptized in the Red Sea, were honourably distinguished by their obedience to the laws of God—‘Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that out-lived Joshua, and who had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.’ Josh. xxiv. 31.

‘The foregoing remarks show how impossible it is to argue for the divine appointment of Infant Baptism from the divine appointment of Infant Circumcision. The two rites are so distinct, that persons who are fitted to receive the one, are utterly unfitted to receive the other. Designed for different classes, bearing different significations, admitting to different communities, and attended with different results, the first might properly admit those who were excluded by the second, and the second properly exclude those who were admitted by the first. Circumcision involved no profession of faith,’ [not even by heathen adult proselytes!] ‘and all servants of Israel were obliged to receive it upon pain of excision; baptism expresses the faith of the baptized person, and was his voluntary act;’ [much more than keeping God’s other commandments!] ‘Circumcision admitted to the privileges of a favoured, but corrupt, community, which was about to be cast away;’ [2000 years afterwards!] ‘baptism admitted to the communion of saints,’ [and of sinners too, if the Baptist churches are constructed on the true primitive model!] ‘Circumcision introduced to external means of improvement, as festivals, sacrifices, and communion with the chosen nation;’ [but not with any religious and spiritual teachings!] ‘baptism was the seal of pardon, regeneration, and salvation,’ [and of course, sealing or assuring all these blessings to every body dipped by our opponents!] ‘Circumcision accomplished for

‘the unregenerate infant all that it was intended to accomplish;’ [even though it did not keep the law !] ‘but baptism accomplishes nothing for the unregenerate infant, absolutely nothing,’ [any more than it does for the unregenerate adult!] ‘The ‘circumcision of the unregenerate infant was a blessing to him, ‘because it introduced him to a moral and religious training,’ [which its godly parents would have totally neglected, had it not been circumcised!] ‘but the baptism of the unregenerate ‘infant is a mischief to it, because, while it adds nothing to ‘its means of instruction, deludes it with the mockery of a ‘pretended adoption into the family of God, which may ‘hinder him from seeking a real adoption;’ [an evil which never happened to a Jew, nor to an immersed adult!] p. 183-185. A more defective or perverted view of the case in question, I believe, will nowhere be found, than the above. Yet, the same writer tells us, that ‘Circumcision to ‘the Lord is similar to baptism to the Lord, both external ‘acts betokening the same duty of sanctification and dedication ‘to God!’ p. 14.

Mr. Noel intimates that circumcision was a rite administered to adults chiefly, if not generally. That, in the first instance, men of various ages were circumcised, is plain from the divine record, and from the necessity of the case. But, it is equally plain, that it was not designed for Hebrew adults afterwards. Every male Israelite, and every male child, born in the house of an Israelite, was to be circumcised, at eight days old. Adult circumcision was the rare exception. Infant circumcision was the law, the rule, the custom. The general administration of the ceremony in Gilgal, and the occasional circumcision of a heathen adult proselyte, were exceptions, occurring long after the institution of the ordinance. Hence, infants were all but the universal subjects of this operation. From the days of Abraham to the days of Joshua, it is probable, that not a single adult Hebrew had ever been circumcised; and from the days of Joshua to the death of Christ, it is doubtful if one adult, of their nation, had undergone this ceremony. To talk of ‘the godly or ungodly’ subjects of circumcision, is only to mislead the unreflecting reader; unless babies of eight days old might be termed godly or ungodly—meaning the mentally and practically good and bad—the virtuous or the vicious—the holy or the criminal! Circumcision, like baptism, as a rule, was intended for the newly born, the innocent, those who knew not their right hand from their left, or who had done neither good nor evil,

or for such as were of the kingdom of God. As an exception only, were adults ever circumcised; and as an exception only, is adult baptism proper now. A law, which made the vaccination of all infants in a country imperative, would soon render the vaccination of adults a rare occurrence. If circumcision and baptism are analogous, in respect of their subjects, as they are admitted to be, in several important particulars, by most of our opponents; no adults, except proselytes from the Gentiles or the Jews, would ever undergo this rite.

That this rite of the ancient covenant was quite as spiritual in its teachings and results as that of baptism itself, may soon be made apparent: 'And the Lord God shall circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Deut. xxx. 6. Was baptism typical of greater spiritual blessings? 'Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.' Jer. iv. 4. 'For all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.' Jer. ix. 26. Was the lack of spiritual baptism a greater evil than the lack of spiritual circumcision, as here stated by the prophet? 'Ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house.' Ezek. xlv. 7. Could baptism confer a greater favour than introducing men into God's sanctuary, or the want of it prove a greater evil to people now? see v. 9. 'Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.' Acts vii. 51. The spiritually circumcised resisted not the Spirit—could more be said of the spiritually baptized? 'And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.' Rom. iv. 11. Could baptism seal a higher spiritual blessing? 'What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God.' Rom. iii. 1, 2. Is it pretended, that baptism is more advantageous than this to a Christian? 'We are of the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Phil. iii. 3. Were those baptized any better in life or affection?

That God required as much piety in the circumcised Hebrew as in the baptized Christian is manifest. 'And

'now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good.' Deut. x. 12, 13. In fact, the apostle Peter, commending Christianity, merely says, 'We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they'—the circumcised Israelites. Acts xv. 11. Mr. Young remarks, 'We frequently hear circumcision called *carnal*, and that it was wholly a proof of earthly blessings . . . Paul was of a different way of thinking. He says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3. The man who uses those words views circumcision as a spiritual ordinance. There is no ordinance in the New Testament which includes more than this, and we do not find so much said of baptism, though it has the same meaning with that of circumcision.' p. 9.

To argue, that circumcision was often attended with no practical spiritual good, is of no force; for neither is the baptism of either children or adults always succeeded by divine grace. Or, to say, that many temporal blessings were connected with the former rite, is of equal irrelevancy; for the like may be said in respect of the latter. Indeed, it is probable, that more earthly blessings are connected with Christianity, than were ever enjoyed by the early descendants of Abraham. That circumcision is placed on a par with baptism, in its spiritual purport, may be further proved. 'For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.' Rom. ii. 28, 29. Substitute the terms Christian and baptism for Jew and circumcision, and you will find the perfect accordance of the passage with the entire tenor of gospel doctrines. That the rites of baptism and circumcision are equally spiritual may be still further seen. 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the circumcision of your flesh,



“hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you ‘all trespasses.’ Col. ii. 11-13. That these results, whether designated circumcision or baptism, are spiritual, as well as the divine agency that produces them, is apparent to the slightest observation.

That circumcision sealed or proffered more spiritual than worldly benefits, will be seen from a moment’s candid review of the subject. The promises of a temporal order, made to Abraham, included the possession and enjoyment of the Holy Land by his posterity, while they were obedient to God and observed his covenant. ‘And I will establish my covenant ‘between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generation, ‘for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy ‘seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and thy seed ‘after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land ‘of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their ‘God.’ Gen. xvii. 7, 8. This land, be it observed, was not more fertile than Goshen, nor more lovely than Damascus, nor better defended by nature than many parts of Greece. In comparison with the wilderness, it flowed with milk and honey. Having God for its King, his temple for their worship, and his ordinances for their edification and comfort ; it was the glory of all lands, and Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth. But nothing else rendered it so. This was the extent of the boon, being rather a religious than a secular benefaction ; and, doubtless, it was highly estimated. But, during the first 400 years, after the promise was made, the descendants of Abraham, (though enjoying spiritual means), were kept out of this inheritance. Afterwards, whenever a Jew passed the boundaries of Canaan, these temporal privileges were foregone ; and if he became so rebellious as to be expatriated, they were finally forfeited. And, at last, the seed of Abraham totally failed to possess the blessing thus promised to their great progenitor.

But the spiritual results were not subject to such fluctuations, and remained with the people under most untoward circumstances. They had their holy oracles, and their divine worship, in the countries whither they were carried captive, or whither they travelled for business, and were located for their secular benefits. They might ever worship in the temple when they came up to Jerusalem ; and keep the feasts, whenever they chose to attend them ; as did multitudes, whose homes were in distant parts of the wide empires of the east. The stranger and his family, proselyted by circumcision and baptism, though he thereby gained no lasting inheritance in

the Holy Land ; yet he could worship in the synagogue and temple, and participate in the highest privileges of the Hebrew people. He reckoned the God of the Hebrews as his God ; the promises of the Messiah he joyfully applied to himself ; and these he valued more than all the beauties and bounties of the hills, valleys, and plains of that delightful land. In a word, the temporal blessings of the covenant of circumcision were limited in their value, extent, and duration ; while the spiritual were inestimable, and everlasting, to all the faithful and godly seed of their father Abraham ; and but little, if, in reality, any thing inferior to those promised to all the true followers of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Noel reasons, ' If there be such an analogy between 'circumcision and baptism, that infants may be baptized, because 'infants may be circumcised, the analogy must extend to every 'class.' p. 169. That this is true, in respect of every class brought into a similar relation to God—willing or prepared to receive divine instruction—as the Jews were in, is the very thing we contend for. The idea, that none but spiritual believers should be the subjects of this rite is what Mr. Noel broaches, but utterly fails to establish. All sincere proselytes were welcome in Israel, were circumcised, or baptized, or both, readily, and, on the part of pious Hebrews, joyfully—and their children with them. What more can be said of men and their families converted to Christianity ? 'Baptism, in the New 'Testament, was the voluntary act of those who were baptized ; 'but circumcision was a law which the persons designated 'could not, without punishment, neglect.' p. 171. Pray, what punishment was inflicted for the neglect of circumcision, beyond foregoing those blessings promised to such as underwent the rite ? just as the unbaptized were subjected to the loss of the privileges promised to those who submitted to this ceremony. There were no direct punishments inflicted in either case. 'Neither infant nor servant received circumcision 'in virtue of their piety, nor the piety of their parents.' p. 175. The like we maintain is the case in respect of baptism. Indeed, nearly half the people our opponents immerse are as destitute of real piety as the circumcised Israelites.

'The circumcision of Infants was not meant to sanction the 'baptism of Infants, from the difference of the two communities 'to which these two rites admit those who receive them.' p. 177. But, we have seen, or shall prove, that these two communities, as the professors of the revealed religion of the true God, were the same, in all their leading particulars. Jehovah

never established two religions in the world—though the one varied in its aspect and ceremonials. ‘The circumcision of infants affords no sanction for the baptism of infants, because of the different effects which are said in Scripture to flow from these two ordinances.’ p. 181. This would be true, if baptismal regeneration flowed from undergoing this rite, yet not otherwise. But, if the result of baptism be simply a dedication to God, entitling its subjects to religious instruction and the external advantages of Christian ordinances, the parallel between the two ceremonies is too apparent to be controverted.—‘Circumcision, when rightly received, secured neither salvation, nor grace, nor pardon, nor any spiritual blessing beyond those which were external.’ p. 181. ‘Baptism, on the other hand, when rightly received, being the true profession of a death unto sin, and a new life of faith, and devotedness to God through Christ by the Spirit, was the *bath of regeneration*, (Titus iii. 5), *was accompanied by the remission of sins*, (Acts ii. 38 ; xxii. 16), was the act of putting on the righteousness of Christ, (Gal. iv. 27), and ended in salvation. 1 Pet. iii. 21 ; Mark xvi. 16. The qualification for rites, with effects so different, could not be the same. It is seen at once to be most improbable, that the rite, sealing the external privileges of the law, should be administered on the same terms with the rite, sealing the spiritual and eternal blessings of the gospel. It is exceedingly improbable that there should be the same required qualifications for blessings so exceedingly diverse.’ p. 181.

Can this gentleman mean, that *water-baptism* seals, makes sure, all the spiritual blessings of regeneration, the remission of sins, of being really in Christ, and of salvation? If he does, he may claim near kindred with Pusey and the Pope ; for what could they ascribe more to this ceremony? If he does not mean this, his argument is frivolous, and calculated only to deceive. If it be intended, that baptism is a testimony that the subject is already a Christian, the ceremony confers nothing more than external privileges, and stands on a level with his own notion of the results of circumcision. He seems anxious to make it appear, that dipping confers some vast advantage on his people ; and, in doing so, magnifies a mere ceremonial into a sanctifying and saving ordinance. But let him look into these glorious and gracious results, as exemplified in a large portion of the people his brethren have immersed! To say, they have not been rightly baptized, or have not rightly received this ceremony, and hence the failure of it ; is much

like persons promising you wonderful benefits from their charms or spells; and accounting for your non-reception of them, through your want of faith in their operations!

Mr. Noel distinguishes circumcision from baptism, by observing, that the former was obligatory, and the latter voluntary—the former not to be neglected without punishment, while the latter might be disregarded with impunity. This is strange reasoning—as if the observance of God's commands were optional, unless enforced with present penal sanctions! But one thing is plain, that the great benefits attached to baptism, are forfeited by the neglect of this ordinance; as the religious benefits attached to circumcision were forfeited by the neglect of that rite. I contend that Infant Baptism is as obligatory under the gospel, as circumcision was under the former dispensations. It is not specifically enjoined respecting the age of its subjects, as circumcision was to Abraham—though admitting, as we have seen, numerous exceptions. But, that it was enjoined and practised from the days of Moses, till the end of the apostolic age, has been rendered as manifest as many other acts and obligations, about which our opponents entertain not the shadow of a doubt. For instance, our Lord never directly *commanded* even his disciples to keep the Christian passover, nor is it ever plainly commanded subsequently—the duty and privilege of this sacrament, and the time of its recurrence, being inferred from its first observance. The communion of females, at the Lord's supper, is never specified or enjoined; nor is the observance of the Lord's day commanded by Christ, or his apostles. And yet, a due regard of them all is as binding on Christians, as circumcision was on the Jews; and disobedience here is as iniquitous as neglecting the initiatory rite of the Abrahamic covenant. Infant Baptism is as binding, as was circumcision. To neglect the former is as sinful as neglecting the latter; and the spiritual evils, in both cases, are about the like, if fairly and legitimately carried out. The Jew loses the advantages obtained from the study of the oracles of God; and the gentile foregoes all claim to that teaching which the apostles were commanded to impart to the baptized.

‘When the Jewish nation became corrupt, it remained still ‘the covenanted nation, because it was composed of the descendants of Abraham; and it was owned by God as such.’ p. 179. This was just as immersed adults, who apostatize from the faith and profession of the gospel, are still regarded by their brethren, as consecrated to Christ as long as they live, however



badly—requiring no fresh immersion in order to enjoy all the means of religious ordinances and advantages. With regard to the Jewish nation, it holds true, however, only in part. The ten tribes were scattered; and the Lord expressed his displeasure with the other two for their sins; as much as with the uncircumcised heathen. Their circumcision, in effect, became uncircumcision to the profane and rebellious. And were not baptized congregations reprov'd and punished just in the same way? Where now are the seven churches in Asia, and many others, once flourishing in the eastern world? Yet, the ancient Jewish church was not entirely cut off; as there were many pious persons of that communion existing in the days of Christ, who embraced the gospel and became his disciples. There was ever a remnant of the spiritual church of Christ in the darkest times of its history. He adds, 'Infants might be conformists, they might be Jewish citizens by circumcision; but since they cannot be known to be penitent believers, they must not be admitted to the communion of saints.' p. 180. But, may they not be admitted to the general privileges and blessings of Christianity by baptism, as our opponents admit little ones to the covenants of the gospel by their dry dedication, thereby making them fellow-citizens with the sanctified disciples of Christ—a position analogous to that of the little Hebrew conformists?

He proceeds, 'The ignorant and unregenerate adult was obliged to receive the token of the national covenant. To become a citizen of that nation' [or national church] 'required no more spirituality than to become a citizen of England.' p. 177. What, did not Jehovah require all his people to be a holy nation, a peculiar people, equally as he requires all men now every where to repent, and all his professed disciples to love and obey him? Besides, no adult heathen was compelled to join that nation at all, so as to become a subject of it, unless it were by the force of truth on his judgment and heart. If he wished to become a Jew, he must receive the mark of Judaism; just as any heathen, becoming a Christian, must undergo its initiatory rite. Besides, to talk of a baby, eight days' old—and scarcely any older persons were ever circumcised—being *compelled* to receive the mark of the Abrahamic covenant; implies an intelligent resistance which hardly comports with our notions of the most precocious and pugnacious of these Hebrew youngsters!

Again, he argues, 'The promises of the covenant of circumcision did not include salvation, nor renewal of heart,

'nor gift of the Holy Spirit.' p. 152. Nor does the covenant of water-baptism, unless it is an invariable seal of spiritual grace, or a divine regeneration of the soul. Take that in the Red Sea, as expounded by Mr. Stovel. Grace and salvation were not, thus, conditional. Simply, because a man is baptized, in the most approved style of dipping, he is not more certified of eternal life, than was a Jew, because he was circumcised. Alas! how often have both Jews and gentiles been deluded with such groundless hopes! 'Abraham's 'covenant was conditional and defectible.' p. 157. Wherein was it more so than that of the New Testament, which is declared to be the same in all its leading features? 'No 'previous instruction was ordained, no profession required, 'no examination instituted, no delay allowed,' [in circumcision.] p. 167. Certainly not, in the first great act of circumcision; nor was it in the first great baptizing in the Red Sea; nor in the first great consecration on the day of pentecost. But, was it not otherwise afterwards, 'when 'proselytes and their children were admitted into the national 'covenant,' [by circumcision and water-baptism?] p. 143. Would not a profession be required, instruction given, examinations instituted, in the case of circumcised adults, as much as in the case of adult proselytes to Christianity? Why, every animal, from an ox to a kid, was examined before it was consecrated to the Lord. That the babes were not interrogated in either case, we may readily conceive; and that when the parents were ready for the rite, there would be no delay, through the slow responses of the little ones, may be equally imagined! Mr. Gamble justly remarks, 'The apostle in no 'instance examined the spiritual character of the candidates 'for baptism.' p. 47. 'In the first cases, there was no previous 'knowledge whatever of Christianity up to the hour of baptism.' p. 49. Even Paul himself must have been very ignorant of Christianity up to the time of his baptism by Ananias.

I must not overlook a remark of Dr. Carson bearing on this head. 'Circumcision neither signed nor sealed the blessings of the 'covenant of Abraham to the individuals to whom it was, by 'divine appointment, administered.' p. 223. He means, that many were circumcised, who did not obtain the benefits or blessings it promised to those who underwent this rite. He thence concludes, that the analogy between that ceremony and Christian baptism is, so far, destroyed; seeing all, who are rightly baptized, possess the blessings signed or sealed by it! But, does adult or believers' baptism, even as administered

by our opponents, always sign and seal the blessings of the gospel covenant to the individuals themselves? If so, what are we to say to the previous statistics, of the apostacy of the baptized! Stovel says, 'Men enter the' [Baptist] 'church, 'without any change of heart, and they influence the society 'of the church, by the unsanctified developments of their 'fallen nature.' *Reg. Lect. iv. p. 12.* The fact is, that circumcision did sign or seal to the seed of Abraham the blessings included in the ancient covenant, as fully as baptism signs and seals the blessings of Christianity to the seed of believers, and to the young, who undergo this rite. That did not insure the benefit to the young Hebrew; this does not insure the benefit to the young Christian—nor to the old one either. A forfeiture, in both cases, was possible and actual, through the subsequent unbelief and apostacy of the parties. Mr. Edwards says, 'The Baptists make circumcision no religious rite at all.' p. 38. Their reasons are manifest. If it be a religious institution, it affords too many arguments in favour of Infant Baptism, for our opponents easily to answer. The simpler and safer plan for them is, to treat it as a mere political institution, to be observed only during the political existence of the Hebrew nation! This notion, however, is in direct opposition to the language of Paul and the other inspired servants of God.

Mr. Noel offers many other concise observations, bearing, more or less remotely, on our subject, which may be as well concisely to notice in this place. 'If baptism be the sign 'of regeneration, an unregenerate person ought not to be 'baptized.' p. 112. And if 'circumcision be a sign of 'regeneration,' as he elsewhere asserts, (p. 173), an unregenerate person ought not to have been circumcised! But, he admits above, that the unregenerate Jews were circumcised and baptized; and we, therefore, infer that such may still be baptized! 'Baptism cannot be the baptism of regeneration, 'except with respect to those who are previously regenerate,' p. 112. But, why not?—unless Christian baptism be essentially different from Jewish baptism—which difference he has not attempted, nor is he able, to disprove. On his principles, none but regenerated men may receive an instructive benefit, or be made the medium of conveying heavenly truth, or perform a religious duty! Even worshipping God, keeping the sabbath, praying, or reading the Scriptures, must not be attended to, except by the regenerate, for they are all Christian acts! 'If the rite is a public manifestation of spiritual life,

'it should be withheld from those who offered no tokens of 'that life.' p. 112.—Where is it called a public manifestation of spiritual life in the Scriptures? Nowhere. 'Our Lord has 'not commanded us either to eat unleavened bread, or to 'recline at the Lord's table, or to wash each other's feet; had 'he so commanded, we ought to do these things.' p. 130. But, will example go for nothing with our opponents, when it does not affect their believers' immersion? Can they find adult dipping more clearly enjoined than washing one another's feet? 'If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your 'feet,' [which he had just done,] 'ye, also, ought to wash one 'another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye 'should do as I have done unto you.' John xiii. 14, 15.

Mr. Noel speaks of the 'application for baptism' by the three thousand on the day of pentecost. p. 66. The record of this is wanting. All we know of the matter is, that Peter applied to them, and persuaded them to undergo the rite. 'There is evidence, that, with respect to the great majority,' [of the three thousand] 'their repentance and faith were real.' p. 67. Most Baptist writers conclude, that *all* of them were regenerate; now it amounts to but a great majority, say, two-thirds of that number. And where is the evidence of the saving nature of the repentance and faith of all the rest? Up to the time of the pentecost, he says, 'scarcely any of the 'rulers had believed in him, not a single priest, not a solitary 'pharisee, had become his disciple.' p. 68. Very possible. But, where are the converts of John; all they of Jerusalem, of Judea, and of the region round about Jordan; baptized on sincere repentance, confession of sin, resolutions to become holy, and professions of faith? Where are the people prepared and made ready for the Lord, by John's ministry, when not a single ruler, priest, or pharisee, (constituting a large body of the population), believed in Christ, up to the time of his ascension? And where are all the people baptized by our Lord's disciples—which, Dr. Newman says, was, (speaking generally,) the same as Christian baptism? 'Since all persons 'rightly baptized are justified, and yet, none but believers can 'be justified, it follows, that all persons rightly baptized must 'be believers.' p. 108. Then, it follows, that a minority of the three thousand were not rightly baptized; nor were any of the multitudes, who afterwards apostatized from the profession made to John, the disciples, and apostles of Christ, rightly baptized! Nor are the vast numbers which, according to the annual statistics of the Baptist churches, annually



excommunicated, rightly baptized! And, then, we should like to know wherein the defect lies; since, on a real conversion of any of these apostates, they are not dipped a second time?

Mr. Noel goes on:—‘As an unregenerate adult might be ‘circumcised, and an unregenerate infant might receive ‘circumcision; but, as an unregenerate adult might not be baptized, ‘an unregenerate infant might not receive baptism.’ p. 169. But, it is not proved or provable, that an unregenerate adult might not be baptized. It is admitted that they were baptized in great numbers; and that rightly too. And our opponents do it, as they publicly confess; and these baptisms are practically as valid as that of the best men in their denominations. And, therefore, according to his logic, ‘Unregenerate ‘infants might receive baptism’ also. I suppose, Mr. Noel will not deny that persons professing the Christian religion were fully baptized. Hear, then, Paul’s description of some of these baptized people. ‘For men shall be’ [and even now are] ‘selfish, covetous, false, boasters, haughty, blasphemers, ‘disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural ‘affection, ruthless, calumnious, incontinent, merciless, haters ‘of the good, treacherous, headlong with passion, blinded with ‘pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having ‘a form of godliness, but renouncing the power. From such ‘turn away.’ 2 Tim. iii. 2-6.—*Conybeare’s Trans.*—‘Since ‘there is a manifest falsehood in the profession made in baptism ‘by unregenerate persons, how can Christian ministers have ‘authority from Christ to sanction such falsehoods, by administering baptism to any persons who are not manifestly ‘converted?’ p. 45. As infants never make any professions at baptism, Mr. Noel must refer to his own Baptist brethren only in this grave allegation! On their behalf, I would just say, that they seldom dip any person manifestly or notoriously unconverted. They are fallible, and deceived by false professions of being truly converted. Possibly, our opponent himself may be taken in, before he has done with his immersing operations, if he has not been so already! ‘The ‘Jewish baptism was intended for none but believers in Moses; ‘the Christian baptism is intended for none but believers in ‘Christ.’ p. 49. But Jewish baptism was unquestionably intended for children also; and as John and the apostles followed the example of the Jews, in administering this rite, children, most assuredly, should now be baptized unto Christ!

He proceeds—‘Nothing whatever is said of any female

'converts' [to John's baptism]; 'there might have been no 'women in the crowds, or very few.' p. 81. And yet, I dare say, that now two women are immersed by our brethren to one man; notwithstanding their timidity and shaken nerves, even when they are not publicly dipped in a river, without suitable preparatory appliances! On one occasion, 'multitudes' of believers were added to the Lord, 'both men and *women*,' and, of course, they were baptized, but how did they decently immerse the 'female converts' in the city of Jerusalem? Acts v. 14. Besides, if the first Christian baptizers dipped comparatively few of their female converts, what grounds have our opponents for baptizing comparatively so many of them now! 'True,' [water] 'baptism secures pardon.' 'True, baptism saves'—what! those who are not pardoned and saved before? 'Those rightly baptized are in Christ!' But were they not in him previously, or else how did they become regenerate and believers immediately afterwards? 'True, baptism secures 'the gift of the Holy Spirit.' But must they not have the Spirit before Mr. Noel would knowingly dip them? When the baptism of our opponents does not secure the Holy Ghost, is it a false baptism? And if so, should it not be viewed and treated as a nullity? 'It is a death unto sin, and a new 'life of holiness.' (p. 116, 117). What! water-baptism!

'As the statement of the Apostle (1 Peter iii. 20, 21) is 'absolute, that baptism doth save us, it follows that baptism 'implies faith, is an act of faith, and may be put for faith itself.' p. 114. But Peter, in explanation, says, that water-baptism does not save us, but the answer of a good conscience, which is a very different thing from immersing a person under water. Still, water baptism is put for faith! It might as truly be put for fear or hope. Would Mr. Noel tell his congregation, that his dipping saves the souls of the dipped? And if not, he either must misunderstand Peter, or admit that his baptism and Peter's were not alike—at least, in effect! 'God has 'made repentance necessary' [essential] 'to baptism.' p. 126. What kind of repentance and faith must it be—spiritual and saving? If so, all persons undergoing this rite, without this spiritual meetness, are still unbaptized. Besides, to whom were repentance and faith so necessary? To the children baptized in the-sea? Or to the baby proselytes to Judaism? Or to all infants now? And are they necessary prerequisites to their spiritual baptism, to their becoming of the kingdom of God, or to their getting to heaven?

Further, he argues, 'As Christ has not commanded the

'baptism of infants, it can be no violation of his command to 'delay their baptism till they become believers. p. 130. By command, he means, a clear and express injunction. But, if it may be inferred from Jewish proselytism, or from the baptism in the sea, it is as manifestly commanded, as keeping the Lord's day, or as the communion of females at the Lord's supper, or as baptizing young men and maidens, or old men and women. And might it not as reasonably be said, defer these latter actions till explicit, verbal, or written commands to do them, come from Heaven? But though Infant Baptism may not be literally enjoined, he does not question, that some introductory rite, like that of old, would have been proper, and, of course, he means the ceremony of baptism. 'As 'Judaism had its initiatory rite, so it is useful that Christianity 'should have its initiatory rite likewise.' p. 17. But, as the initiatory rite was administered to Jewish children almost exclusively, it is reasonable to conclude, that the initiatory rite to Christianity should be administered to children also. But, though this initiatory rite among the Jews, was not administered to one adult out of every million of the population; yet, according to this gentleman's doctrine, not one child born in Christendom, should be initiated to Christianity in the usual way! What a striking and beautiful analogy between the two economies!

To argue, as Mr. Noel does, 'that persons, intending to 'continue in sin, would not like solemnly to renounce it' at the baptistry, especially 'if their nerves were shaken' [at the sight of the water;] 'that few wordly persons, without strong 'inducements of a wordly kind,' [which, of course, they never feel!] 'would wish to make so solemn a profession of self-'dedication to God falsely;' [a thing unknown in our body!]' 'that should they wish to do so, it would not be in their power! [hence it is never done!] 'the church' [and not the minister] 'which is the judge of the qualifications of candidates, having 'no right' [and it never does wrong!] 'to admit any one to 'membership, if the baptismal profession be palpably' [or actually] 'false.' p. 276-279. Again, he says, 'Our Lord 'has forbidden any persons to apply for baptism who are not 'true believers; and he has forbidden his ministers,' [though the church is the judge of their qualities,] 'to baptize any 'who do not seem,' [hypocritically or not,] 'to be true believers.' p. 44. Where Christ says all this, either directly, or by fair inference, Mr. Noel fails to show us; nor have we the means of discovering it.

It is well known, and universally admitted, that multitudes of unregenerated people, and women too, really brave all the difficulties of this dipping, withstand the fearful ordeal of examination, and are gladly admitted by ministers and members into particular Baptist societies. But this initiatory rite, instead of sealing or making sure to them pardon, regeneration, and eternal glory, too often tends to place them in a false position, to produce a morbid conscience, and to cherish vain expectations. One is occasionally amused at the graces, glories, and importance, some good persons throw around a ceremony they wish others to admire and attend. But, in truth, personal piety, pardon, and heaven, were sealed to none under the law or the gospel, by either circumcision or baptism. 'For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature—but faith that worketh by love.' These institutions were designed as seals of God's covenant; were symbols of the spiritual blessings it contained; and, when applied to persons, they secured to them the external means of obtaining the blessings themselves, but did nothing more.

I must not, however, dismiss the topic involved in the question under immediate consideration, without remarking further, that while the former covenant included spiritual and temporal blessings, the present covenant does the like: and that in the latter, as previously hinted, the secular blessings—all points being duly and fully considered—are equal to those of the former economies. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' 1 Tim. iv. 8. 'Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.' Eph. vi. 2, 3. 'Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?....But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Matt. vi. 31, 33. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' 1 Tim. vi. 6. 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Heb. xiii. 5. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' Matt. v. 5; see ch. vi. 25, 34.

Though these and similar promises do not assure to the people of God, as such, worldly kingdoms, triumph and glory in this life, they afford them an assurance of all that is



needful, and comfortable ; and on that their gracious Father is causing his children to hope. We may reasonably conclude, that Christians, in general, are rendered as temporally happy as were the ancient Jews ; and that God's real children now come little or nothing behind Israel in secular benefits. ' All ' things work together for good to them that love God : ' and these bodies of ours are as much the object of God's providential care as were those of the ancient Israelites. If the covenant of circumcision included mixed benefactions, so does that of baptism. As the latter embraces superior religious advantages—a clearer and fuller revelation, and a larger out-pouring of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit ; it would not have been marvellous, had it comprehended fewer earthly enjoyments than it actually contains, or than it indirectly, but certainly, insures. At any rate, both circumcision and baptism typified great and glorious spiritual blessings ; and they introduced all, who complied with their claims, to many advantages and consolations for soul and body—for time and eternity. They induct us to a grand dispensation of blessedness, for which we should be heartily and unfeignedly grateful, and of which our children should not be deprived, any more than the descendants of the father of the faithful, the friend of God.

There is one circumstance mentioned in Col. ii. 11, 12, worthy of notice, before quitting this particular ; as it shows that baptism and circumcision are placed on an equality, at least, in some of its leading allusions. Circumcision and baptism are spoken of as analogous in their designs and results, and as equally applicable to the like subjects. The typical designs are putting off the body of the sins of the flesh ; and of rising, as from the dead, through the faith of the operation of God. We know that the persons circumcised among the Jews, were infants—probably not one in ten hundred thousand of them being adults. Further, an Israelite, thinking of circumcision, would, probably, seldom or never associate the idea of an adult with this rite. The consequence would be, that when Paul had circumcision in his mind, it was that only of children, and not of grown-up men ; and that when, at the same instant, baptism was in his mind, infants, and *not* adults, would naturally be associated with it—at least, they would not be overlooked. I lay no great stress on this latter circumstance. But, I can readily imagine, from an analogous case, that, had the apostle spoken of baptism, in a like relation to some act under the law, in which adults had been all but the entire

subjects ; our opponents would have felt themselves furnished with a valuable argument in favour of adult baptism, as opposed to the baptism of infants.

It may be desirable to observe, that while circumcision and baptism agree in many leading particulars, teach the like impressive and important lessons, and point to similar spiritual results ; there are some things in which they manifestly differ. In fact, we can hardly suppose, that both would have been instituted so early, and continued to be administered, in the same religious system, and principally to the same persons, and mostly at the same time, so many centuries, had they been entirely of the same import. Circumcision had an especial reference to the covenant of Abraham ; Baptism to that of the Mosaic ceremonial. One particularly spoke of putting away sin, by the shedding of blood ; the other of removing pollution, by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. The one said, ye must be pardoned ; the other, ye must be clean. The one had an especial reference to the law, the other to the gospel ; the one inflicted pain, the other imparted pleasure. Probably, in other matters they differed, though, in their main designs, they graciously agreed—teaching redemption by Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Carson remarks, ‘Circumcision and baptism correspond ‘in meaning. They both relate to the removal of sin, the one ‘by cutting, the other by washing.’ And Mr. Noel states, ‘Circumcision to the Lord is similar to baptism to the Lord, ‘both external acts betokening the same duty of sanctification ‘and dedication to God.’ Still, like all other specific divine institutions, while agreeing in many particulars, they all had some distinct purposes in the economy of religious means. Baptism and circumcision, even if administered to the same child and in the same ritual, were not so united, as that the one might not be removed without damaging the other ; or the one cease without destroying its associate.

QUESTION V.—*Was not the Old Testament church a mere type of the New ?*—or was it not a carnal church typifying a spiritual one ; a local church typifying a universal ; and a temporary church typifying an everlasting one ? Dr. Carson says, ‘The church of Israel was the type of the church of the ‘New Testament, containing no doubt the body of the people ‘of God at that time on the earth, and in this point of view, ‘may be called the same. Both are called the kingdom of ‘God, and both were such, but in a different sense. The one ‘was a kingdom of this world[!] the other is a kingdom not

‘of this world. God’s kingdom of Israel contained many who did not belong to his spiritual kingdom; and some belonged to his spiritual kingdom who did not belong to the typical kingdom. All the believers belong to the church of Christ, but all believers did not belong to the church of Israel. As the church of Israel was the church of God, typical of his true church, and containing in every successive age a remnant of the spiritual seed of Abraham, according to the election of grace, the New Testament church is spoken of in the Old under the figure of Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, God’s holy mountain, &c.’ p. 234.

Before replying to the preceding questions, or meeting Dr. Carson’s statements, we must ascertain the meaning of the word type, as employed in the New Testament. The learned editor of *Calmet’s Dictionary* of the Bible, says, it is a ‘Greek word, which signifies generally a resemblance, by whatever means made.’ It is used in the Greek Testament sixteen times; and it is translated seven times by the English word ‘Example;’ two of these are in our text, v. 6, 11. Twice it is rendered ‘Pattern;’ twice, ‘Prints,’ of the nails in our Saviour’s hands; twice, ‘Figures’ or ‘Copies;’ once, ‘Fashion;’ once, ‘Form;’ and once, ‘Manner.’ Therefore, had the Old Testament church been a type of the New, the general sense and use of the word would not have bespoken much inferiority in the ancient system. But, the word is never employed to express the idea, that the church in the wilderness was a type of the gospel church, at least, in the sense of inferiority intended in the objection. The church, composed of the worshippers of the God of heaven, has ever been *one* and equal in all its prime features, from the time of Moses till the present day. Reformations and revivals have taken place in that church; but its essential identity has remained unaffected by any of them; and it must continue so while the same God is worshipped, the same Mediator is appealed to, and the same Spirit works in the like natures of mankind.

On the death of Christ, there was a great reformation. More light was shed on the minds of men, by the more full and clearer dispensation of truth, through the ministry of the apostles; and a mighty influence affected their hearts, by a larger than ordinary communication of the Holy Ghost—as in the times of Whitfield and Wesley in this country. Much that had been previously associated with the church, in forms, rites, and arrangements, was abolished. Priests, altars, sacrifices, tithes, incense, feasts, and many external observances,

were removed ; as having answered their respective purposes, and fulfilled their day ; and the simple form of worship, as conducted in the synagogue, was recognized and established. Still, the church—the assembly, the congregation, professedly and openly worshipping the God of heaven—remained the same in all its essential constituents, properties, principles, and services. It was composed of the like characters, before and after the death of the Redeemer. The same spiritual affections and social duties were required of its members previously, as after that glorious, yet tragical, event.

An anonymous writer inquires : ‘ Was Jesus Christ the head of a carnal church ? He was head of the church under the law, even as in the days of the gospel. And will any sober man say, he was the head of a carnal church ? This were heterogeneous, indeed, that a spiritual head should be joined to a carnal church. But, I pray, what singular virtue do these men see, and find, in baptism, that they so much admire it above circumcision ? What is there in it of itself—since they keep such ado about it—more than in circumcision ? It is altogether, in itself, as carnal as circumcision, and the people that submit to it as carnal as others ; and as carnal and perverse a use do some of them make of it, as the Jews did of circumcision . . . There is a circumcision in the flesh, and a circumcision in the heart ; the former carnal, the latter spiritual ; and, so, there is a baptism of the flesh, and a baptism of the spirit. The apostle derides circumcision in the flesh, where that of the heart was wanting, by giving it the contemptible name of concision, and circumcision was uncircumcision, so, dipping is non-baptism, where that of the Spirit is wanting.’

There was a great reformation and revival of religion on the continent in the time of Luther. Much that had been unrighteously blended with gospel-worship was removed ; and many souls were converted, and added to the true church of God, by the ministrations of the faith, in a purer and simpler form, probably more than had been regenerated, in those countries, during several centuries before. But previously, as well as subsequently, to that reformation, there was a church—the same in its prime elements, and holy constituents, even though its numbers, as in ancient Israel, at times, were but small—for who but the catholics themselves, men of more light and piety than the mass of their co-religionists, effected this glorious revolution ?

Indeed, I venture to suggest, that were the national estab-



lishment of this country to be divested of what it holds, teaches, and exhibits, different from the spiritual doctrines, laws, ministrations, and ceremonies, of Independent and Baptist churches; there would be as great, if not as manifest, a change as took place in the Jewish religious system in the days of the apostles. Yet the putting away of the appendages previously made to the gospel scheme, by the state church, would not make another church, any more than a state officer would become another man, by taking off his paraphernalia and attiring himself, as he often does, in the dress of a private gentleman. There would be no annihilation of the real church, no ignoring its fundamental doctrines, duties, and obligations, and even no interruption of its existence; but merely a reform, and such as all intelligent dissenters believe would be of vast advantage to the cause of true holiness, and highly conducive to the glory of God. Nor would any person of sound mind, contemplating such reformatations, affirm that popery was a type of protestantism, or the state church a type of congregationalism, or the general on parade a type of the same gentleman in nonofficial attire, or a judge, in his big wig and gown, a type of his lordship without them. Rites, forms, and ceremonies, were not the church, under the former economy, any more than modes and ecclesiastical measures, are the church now. The church is a body or congregation of people worshipping God, and holding the grand and leading truths of divine revelation. When we use the word Reformation, in reference to the changes which took place in the church of God, we adopt the very term of Scripture, and its import also. In Heb. ix. 10, Paul states, that the changes which took place, through the incarnation and death of the Messiah—were a ‘Reformation’ of the old, and not the Institution of a new, church of God in the Holy Land.

That there were types, figures, shadows, and symbols, in the Old Testament, directing the Jews to spiritual blessings, past, present, and future, no one ever thought of denying; and that these types were, in certain respects, inferior to their antitypes, will be readily conceded. Moses and Aaron, in their official positions, were types of Christ, our King, and glorious High Priest. The sacrifices were types of the atonement. The tabernacle and temple were types of the holiest of all in heaven. And so, according to Mr. Keach, most of the persons of note, the things, and the religious acts, of the law, were types of something or other in the gospel economy. But, still, the former church was no type of the

Christian church, though, in some of its privileges, the former might be inferior to the latter. Water-baptism was a type of the baptism of the Spirit in the days of Moses, as much as in the time of Paul. The Lord's Supper is a type of the sacrifice of Christ, and of the feast of blessings in another world. Hence, we infer, that, as children were baptized into God's congregation, in and after the days of Moses, we must have very strong and clear scriptural proofs to convince us that they should not be baptized into God's church in the present day. Water-baptism, before Christ, was no more a type of water-baptism after Christ came, than circumcision before the age of Moses, was a type of the same rite after the exodus from Egypt.

Besides, if any valid argument might be raised against Infant Baptism, under the gospel dispensation, on the ground that the Old Testament church was a carnal type of the New Testament church; it would follow, that no carnal children should now be baptized; and that only spiritual ones, if they are to be found, should undergo this initiatory rite. But, our opponents neglect the baptism of all children, whether spiritual or not. It is also an unquestioned fact, that the children of the worst Hebrews were naturally as spiritual, as the children of the best Christians; and were equally qualified for the reception of the baptismal rite, in its spiritual aspect, with the offspring of the holiest parents in Christendom. Further, according to the reasoning of our objectors, all the adult Israelites must have been viewed only as carnal, or they would not have been proper types of the spiritual candidates for Christian baptism; while the children of the devil must have been types of the children of God! But, doubtless, many of the Hebrews, both men and women, were as pious and spiritual as any baptized on the day of pentecost, or by any of our brethren in recent times.

Our opponents might consistently contend, that the holy prophets were carnal types of the holy apostles; that the saints in Israel were carnal types of the spiritual saints at Corinth; and that the Sabbath day, preaching, praise, prayer, and adoration, were carnal types of the Lord's day, and of our sanctuary services! Water-baptism, under the former economy, was not a type of water-baptism under the gospel, for, in both cases, they were alike typical of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They precede or follow each other as continuous ordinances in the same church of God. The passover was not a type of the Lord's supper, both being equally types of the death of the

Lamb of God. The one preceded, and the other followed, that tragic scene, and both pertained to the glorious church of God, though there were variations in their administrations. Alford says, 'No sacramental ordinance can be a *type of another*, 'but all alike, though in different degrees of approximation, 'and by different representations, *types of Him*, who is the 'fountain of all good.' Gr. Test. *Text*. In the establishment of the gospel economy, that only was done away which was of no more religious utility, or which comported only with the local position of the Jews, or with the more immediate and manifest national theocracy. But all that was spiritual, moral, and appropriate to all ages, was evidently and purposely retained. Among the institutions thus preserved, assuredly was Christian and Infant Baptism.

There is not a doubt, in my mind, that the providence of God effected the abrogation of the Jewish polity, and the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, in order to do away with those types and symbols which had especial reference to the sacrifice of the Son of God. While Jerusalem stood and remained in the hands of the Jews, the temple would be preserved, the altar would be used, and sacrifices would be daily offered, and all typical persons, things, and actions, would be continued—all virtually saying, the Saviour was not come, and the great atonement for sin was not yet made. To prevent this fearful result, the whole were swept away, never to be again restored. While, on the other hand, whatever comported with the fact of the Saviour having died, or became proofs and memorials of his incarnation and resurrection, or tended to prepare men to believe in, to love, and to obey him, was carefully preserved to his people—and water-baptism was evidently one of those means.

That the churches of the Old and New Testaments were one, may be further confirmed from the fact, that the sacred writers of the former economy predicted, not the annihilation of their church, nor an interval between putting down the one and setting up another in its place; but that the gentiles were to be brought into the very same communion of which they themselves were members—'The gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . they shall gather themselves together, they shall come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side . . . they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar . . . the sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls. In my wrath I smote thee; but in my favour

'have I had mercy on thee . . . Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the gentiles, and that their kings might be brought . . . They shall come unto thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel . . . A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.' (Is. lx. 3, &c.)—when the Messiah shall come in the flesh, and establish his spiritual reign over the gentiles, and bring them into the then existing church of Israel. In the prospect of this sublime event, the Hebrew saints of old rejoiced and gloried; but which they would never have done, had they imagined their beloved church was to be absolutely destroyed, and another substituted in its place. The tabernacle was to be rebuilt and the gentiles were to come into it. Amos ix. 11-16. The divine Messenger was to purify the sons of Levi, and not destroy their heaven-born religion. Mal. iii. 1-4.

In the New Testament, the same doctrine is unfolded and affirmed. The middle wall of partition was to be broken down, and the gentiles were to be brought into the inner court of the house of the Lord—fraternizing with the ancient Israelitish church. Eph. ii. 12, 19. Some of the branches of the fat olive tree—the former church of God—were, through unbelief, to be cut off, and exotic scions were to be grafted in their places. Rom. xi. 17, 24. But, there remained the same tree—with many original branches on it—the venerable and veritable church of God; and this was to stand and flourish to the end of time. The real church of God was to continue one and the same in every essential particular—or all the above passages, and many others, of the like import, are without any rational application. There was never to be a period, even of the shortest duration, from the days of Moses, when the church of God was first duly organized, in which God would not have a church in the world. If there were such a time, we should feel indebted to the advocates of this assumption, to tell us precisely when it occurred, and how long was its duration. As corporate bodies never die, so the first incorporated church abideth for ever. Even in the worst times of Israel, and among the most degenerate of its tribes, there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and who constituted the true church of God in the days of Elias. It is worthy of remark, that for many years after the death of Christ, the church was chiefly, if not entirely, composed of persons, who had been members, (and some of them godly



members too!) of the church instituted under the law—just as the first protestant churches were composed of persons who had been in communion with the church of Rome. These Christian Israelites, so far from imagining themselves apostates from their former faith, evidently felt that they were still professing and maintaining it in greater purity than before; and they frequently appealed to their ancient books, in support and defence of their then present views and conduct.

On the last cited text, (Rom. xi. 17, 24,) Mr. Wills observes, (1) 'That, though the collected body of the Jews, or the generality of that people, were broken off from the church through unbelief; for it is said, "If some were broken off," not all of them; for, as said before, most of the apostles and thousands of the Jews believed. (2) The believing gentiles are ingrafted in their place—*en autois*—in among them.... in amongst the branches of the tree.... implying that some remained still, and the believing gentiles were inoculated (ingrafted) among them, *pro ipsis*, instead of them, in the place and room of the branches broken off. (3) The Jews shall be restored again to the church at the latter end of the world; they shall be in *statu quo prius*, become the church and people of God again, as formerly, but in a more glorious manner.'

Whence he infers, (1) That the same Jewish children, which were visibly of the church immediately before their parents became Christians, continued to be so after.... All that were not broken off by unbelief, did continue unbroken off; that is, they still kept their place and standing in the church of God. To assign any other cause of dis-churching any, than the Scripture hath assigned, is too great presumption, and such as will satisfy no impartial mind. (2) Those Jews who were broken off from the church, their children also being before members, were likewise broken off; therefore it follows, believing gentiles and their children are ingrafted in; for the ingrafting must be proportionable to the breaking off; they succeeding in the place of the former, must enjoy the privileges they lost. (3) When the Jews shall be grafted in again, not with a diminution, but addition to their glory, and one part of their glory was, that they and their seed were God's visible church, then so shall it be with them when they are called.'

'At their first grafting in, they and their children were grafted in; at their casting out, they and their children were broken off; and when they shall be taken in again,

‘they and their children shall be taken in.’ This, Mr. Tombes ‘himself grants.... Thus, then, we argue, If it must be so ‘with them, it must be so with believing gentiles now, or ‘else there would be a schism between Jew and gentile in ‘point of privilege, else there will be two distinct estates in ‘the Christian churches; one of the Jews, holy fathers, and ‘children; another of the gentiles, who have only personal ‘privileges, none for their seed, which is an absurd conceit, ‘and would set up and keep up a partition wall still, contrary to ‘that. Eph. ii. I shall say nothing of other absurdities, which ‘are very numerous, which come from the denying the ‘church membership of the infant seed of believers.’ p. 73-76.

Notwithstanding the above and similar proofs of the identity of the Old and New Testament churches, in every essential and leading particular, we often hear persons speaking of the former as if it had not the same God, Saviour, or Sanctifier, as the latter; and as if there had been different principles of holiness, different faith, different affection, and different obedience, in the days of Moses, David, Isaiah, and Malachi, from what were required in the days of Peter, James, and John his brother. In fact, they talk as if religious people, before the incarnation of Christ, were all totally ignorant of the divine Redeemer, his character, office, and claims, and never looked to him for salvation, nor to the Holy Spirit for sanctification, nor to the moral laws of God for guidance in their social and religious concerns; or, as if they were altogether different from the good men living after the Saviour returned to heaven; or, as if the New Testament were the embodiment of an entirely new religion in the world, commencing on the memorable day of Pentecost. They seem to fancy, that there was no real or visible church, or religious congregation, in the earth, before the death of Christ. All this, too, is pleaded for the sole purpose of proving, if possible, that, while infants were recognized members of the former dispensation, they should not be of the latter; and that now Infant Baptism and membership are superstitious, sinful, and vain. It must, however, be a feeble cause that requires, for its support, such a disjunction and disruption of God’s religious interest in the world. The church of Christ, I repeat, has been the same, in all its essential properties, in all times and places, wherever his name has been recorded, where spiritual worship has been offered, where faith has been in vital exercise, and where his righteous laws have been cheerfully obeyed. Mr. Keach candidly says, ‘We grant the invisible church of God, under

'the law and gospel, is but one and the same.' p. 181. I add, that from the days of Moses, the true church has been systematically and divinely organized and officered by the blessed God himself, and that children have always constituted a large and essential part of it.

QUESTION VI.—*Is not the former spiritual covenant done away, and a new one established in its room?*—The answers given to a preceding question, are substantially a reply to the present. But, as this part of the inquiry is of considerable importance, towards defending our doctrine of Infant Baptism, the reader must pardon the prolixity of our observations upon it—as well as upon some other points, which, at first sight, may appear of remote relation to the subject.—Our opponents refer us to Jer. xxxi. 31-34, and Heb. viii. 6, 13, to prove that the Mosaic covenant was entirely abrogated at the resurrection of Christ; that a perfectly new one was given in its place; and that, though children were included in the former, they are not comprehended in the latter, and, therefore, should not be baptized into it. It may be instructive to determine the meanings of the term Covenant in the passages just referred to.

The original words are *Berith* and *Diatheke*. 'They both signify an arrangement or disposition of affairs;' and in their present connexion, intimate, 'that the gospel should be peculiarly spiritual in its character, and should be attended with the diffusion of just views of the Lord.'—*Barnes*. A covenant between God and man must not be confounded with a covenant between man and his fellow mortals. The former is a divine command, from an absolute superior, and which the inferior is bound, by fearful penalties, to receive and keep. The latter is a compact (*Sunthema*) between two free, equal, and independent parties, fully comprehending its conditions, and both, beforehand, equally at liberty to engage in it, or not. 'Sometimes the word (*Diatheke*) denotes 'the sovereign decree, or purpose of the Almighty, in reference to 'things where no mutual stipulations could take place. And 'in other instances, it expresses the absolute promise of God, 'respecting what he will do for his people.' *Gibbs*, p. 287. 'The decalogue, or ten commandments, is called a covenant. 'Ex. xxiv. 28: and this is exactly the meaning of the word in 'Deut. xxix. 11.' *Jenkins*, p. 26. 'It must be remembered 'that *Diatheke* does not (like the English *covenant*) imply 'reciprocity. It means a *legal disposition*, and would perhaps 'be better translated dispensation here. (Heb. viii. 9.) A

‘covenant between two parties is *Syntheke*.’ *Conybeare and Howson*, v. ii. p. 626.

In God’s covenant, therefore, children are as admissible as men and women. Jehovah enters into covenant even with the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air. Hosea ii. 18. Surely, then, he may embrace children in his gracious covenants of promise. They may be bound to obey the commands of God, as they grow in wisdom and stature, equally with their parents; and they may receive the sign of this covenant when they are unconscious infants, as the Hebrew children received the sign of the covenant of circumcision, when they were only eight days old; or as a father binds his babe to perform certain acts, after attaining to a competent age. The abrogated covenant, referred to by the prophet and the apostle, comprehended the peculiar rules, laws, rites, and rituals, of the Levitical dispensation, and nothing more; as we know that the moral and spiritual portions of the old system remain to this day.

The *new covenant* means the gospel dispensation, with its simpler services, clearer light, and greater efficiency, in converting the souls of men; or, rather, it is a new declaration of the spiritual doctrines and duties of Christianity; as the new commandment, to love one another, was but the reiteration and reinforcement of injunctions as old as the law. But this retrenchment of types and forms, did not affect the essential properties of the ancient system, or render the new materially different. Its constituents were not to be changed. There were not to be new sorts of men and women and children; nor were there to be new kinds of conversion, faith, holiness, or love to God—merely because some of the rituals and arrangements of the Jewish system were to be modified, or totally removed.

Mr. Noel says, ‘As God made a covenant with the descendants of Jacob, with their children and slaves, irrespective of religious character, he ordered them to receive the token of his covenant; and as he has made a new covenant with all believers, he has ordered them also to receive the token of the covenant.’ *Sub.* p. 185. Had the writer completed the parallel, which the subject evidently requires, he would have said, God has made a new covenant with all believers, their children and domestics, and has ordered them to receive the token of the covenant, which is baptism; as exemplified in the case of the household baptisms of the New Testament. We



see, however, that God may make a covenant with children, and that, too, under the new dispensation as well as the old. Whether it were the former covenant enlarged, or an entirely new one, does not affect the point. That children may be the subjects of a divine covenant, and receive the token of it, Mr. Noel plainly concedes. The gratuitous employment of the term 'believers,' and the omission of their 'children,' embraced in this new covenant, evinces the difficulty involved in making out this analogy, on Baptist principles.

This new covenant was to be made with 'the house of Israel,' whose little ones were of 'the church in the wilderness,' and in the holy land; and who, without a divine and imperative command to do so, would never have quietly submitted to have them excommunicated, under any new economy of their ancient religion. No modification or abolition of the priesthood, sacrifices, tithes, or rites, would have caused, occasioned, or required, the expulsion of any Hebrews, of whatever age, from their relative positions in the Church—of the children any more than of men and women. Dr. Owen remarks, 'On the coming of the Messiah, there was not one church taken away, and another set up in the room thereof. The Christian church is not a new church, but the very same that was before the coming of Christ. What is called the new covenant, is only the old one expounded, and enforced, Luke i. 72, 73; just as the New Commandment is only charity, more explicitly stated and more earnestly enforced.'

Dr. Wardlaw, also, says, In both the Old and New Testament Scriptures, 'the ancient church is spoken of, not as annihilated, and succeeded by another, but as visited, comforted, purified, raised up, and gloriously restored from decline and consumption. If, in some passages, the idea of complete renovation appears to be suggested, we need not be surprised that such language should be applied to a change in the state of the church, so remarkable—to a revival so eminently glorious. The prosperity of the church in the latter days, is represented by the "creation of new heavens and a new earth, so that the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind." Is. lxxv. 17; 2 Peter iii. 13. If such language is employed to elevate our conceptions and anticipations of that blessed era, we might surely expect terms somewhat similar, to be used, in reference to the time when "God was to be manifested in the flesh," "a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." Nor let it be overlooked, that the New Testament dispensation was to

be 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and *prophets* ; ' Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.'

It has, notwithstanding, been contended, that the new covenant necessarily excludes children and infants. Dr. Carson refers to the before-cited texts, in Jeremiah and the Hebrews, to prove his assumption. 'For this is the covenant that I 'will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith 'the Lord ; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them 'in their hearts ; and will be to them a God, and they shall 'be to me a people ; and they shall not teach every man his 'neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the 'Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. ' . . . Here we see, that all who are included in this covenant, 'have the laws of God put into their minds, and written in 'their hearts, by himself. Can this be said of infants ? The 'subjects of this covenant know the Lord—all of them—even 'the least of them. This, surely, cannot include infants who 'know nothing. Is there not a necessity to teach children, 'as soon as they are capable of instruction, to know the Lord ? 'Are any children found, who need not instruction ? If not, 'there are no infants in this covenant.' p. 216.

To this argument, I cannot do better than reply, in the words of Professor Wilson. This objection 'would equally 'shut children out of the old covenant, in which all admit 'them to have been included. At the dedication of the *first* 'covenant, Moses "sprinkled the book and all the people, 'saying, this is the blood of the testament' [covenant] 'which 'God hath enjoined unto you." (Heb. ix. 18, 20 ; Exod. 'xxiv. 8.) He had previously read unto them the book of 'the covenant, and received their solemn assent to its 'teachings, and their cordial promise of obedience. With 'one hearty response, the assembled tribes exclaimed, '(Ex. xxiv. 7,) "All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and 'be obedient." Now, it is this very covenant which the 'passage in the Hebrews compares with the new covenant ; 'and Dr. Carson argues for the exclusion of infants from the 'latter, on the ground that they knew not the Lord. If the 'argument is sound, it will equally exclude infants from "the 'first covenant ;" for when Moses had read "the book," the 'people, in the exercise of intelligence, yielded a voluntary 'assent, of which infants are confessedly incapable. Were 'infants really excluded from the old covenant ? Had the 'seed of Abraham no interest in the Mosaic economy till they 'arrived at the age of adults ? Does not the whole history of

‘this economy promptly answer in the affirmative? In Jer. xxiv. 7, God says, “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.” This promise is applied to the Jews under the old covenant, and, without doubt, embraces children. Hence, the promise in ch. xxxi. 31, 32, unquestionably does the same....The terms of the new covenant exhibit no departure from the style of promissory address which Jehovah commonly adopted towards the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.’

Besides, what does the Dr. mean, by saying, ‘That all who are included in this covenant, have the laws of God put into their minds, and written in their hearts, by *himself*?’ Could he intend, that all this knowledge is to be attained without intermediate instruction imparted, before reaching a state of adulthood or manhood? Are Christian people, in these latter days, to be directly inspired, like the ancient prophets, and illuminated by new revelations from Heaven? Few of our opponents would concur in such preposterous assumptions. They well know that there must be prior teaching and training, and that, under both covenants, these processes commenced with the earliest development of the mental faculties of human beings. This being admitted, the deduction of the Dr., from the precited texts, is manifestly inconclusive—proving far too much for his purpose, and, consequently, nothing against Infant Baptism.

The following passage, from *Fleming’s Challenge*, is worthy of quotation, as developing the views of, at least, some of our opponents:—‘Another terrifying blow is aimed to be given to Infant baptism,’ (p. 18.) ‘where this Answerer says, “Here is a full and fair solution to that mighty question, urged by almost all writers on this point, viz :—Whether God has abolished his gracious covenant so far as it concerns the infant children of his people? and where he has signified a repeal of this their privilege? Here is the question, in its full force and strength, and the answer is ready and plain; *they were all left out at this juncture*, upon the change of the dispensation, *and for ever afterwards*; and yet their salvation is as secure as it was before; for if there was any other covenant made, since the abolition of circumcision, as an outward sign, which is to be applied to infants, let it be produced, or else it is high time to have done

‘declaiming upon an imaginary covenant, nowhere to be found in the gospel.’”

To this Mr. Fleming replies, ‘Did ever any rational defender of Infant Baptism once pretend that any *new covenant* was made since the abolition of circumcision? It does not appear that circumcision was abolished till after our Lord had appeared as the promised seed, which promise was made to Abraham, so that the *gospel covenant*, the *new covenant*, was made 433 years before the law. Gal. iii 17. . . . Zacharias calls it his, *i.e. God’s covenant*; Luke i. 72, 73, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember *his* holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham. p. 7, 8. Had infants been *left out*, or excluded a right to some *symbol* by which they are acknowledged *legatees* or *subjects* of the grace of this covenant, we might very justly have expected some notice of it in the revelation—and that they who declared this leaving out, should have given the converted *Jewish parents* some reconciling reasons for such an *act of exclusion*—that they would have told them, why they had not admission to one *common rite* with them; though baptismal water had been all along in use with them, as a symbol of purity.’ p. 14.

Mr. Fleming elsewhere remarks, ‘And here I would observe, that the weight of the debate rests upon the decision of the following question:’—The question is, ‘*Whether our Lord’s not having particularly and expressly specified INFANTS in his baptismal commission, does*’ [all the circumstances taken together] ‘*amount to a prohibition of their baptism?* Or, ‘*whether*’ [taking in all the circumstances] ‘*an express prohibition was not necessary, to warrant us in denying baptism to infants?*’—For my own part, I think there can be no reason assigned why our Lord should neglect to give an *express prohibition*, if it was his will that they should not be baptized. When I consider how *infants* had been treated under the *patriarchal*, and the *Mosaic dispensations*—when I consider how our Lord did personally treat them—and when I take notice of several expressions of the *apostles*, in their favour—*particularly*, that of children becoming *holy* upon the faith of a parent, who otherwise would have been *unclean*. . . . If it should be asked, That, since God had so expressly enjoined circumcision to Abraham’s infant posterity, why was not Christ as express in his injunction of baptism to the infant posterity of Christian converts? I should say,



‘it was not necessary ; since, by a plain inference, they would see it to be the design of the institution ; unless they could suppose, that God’s economy of grace to our world, which has been gradually *opening* and *enlarging* ever since Abraham’s time, till the coming of the Messiah, should then *abridge* and *curtail* the significations of favour to the human family.—When, *on the contrary*, the kingdom of the Messiah did carry those significations to their *zenith* of perfection, or gave them their highest amplification or enlargement—what a strange and unnatural inference would it be against ourselves and offspring, to suppose, that our Lord should *resume* a grant of favour made to *Abraham*, and, in him, to all that should *express like faith* with him!’ *Def.* p. 41, 42.

QUESTION VII.—*Is not ‘the kingdom of God’ on earth, a purely spiritual kingdom ?*—meaning, I presume, that all the subjects of this kingdom are enlightened, holy, and spiritual people ; that unconscious babes cannot belong to it ; and, therefore, should not be baptized into it. But the truth is, that the phrases, ‘kingdom of God,’ and ‘kingdom of heaven,’ are used with about the same latitude of meaning, as the analogous words, *Ecclesia*, Congregation, and Church. We have the redeemed church in glory, the regenerated church on earth, and the general church of Christendom ; the last composed of all persons dedicated to Christ by baptism, and divided into numerous minor sections. We have, in like manner, the kingdom of God in glory, the spiritual kingdom of God on earth ; and the general kingdom of God—the last embracing all who are brought within the pale of religious teachings and ordinances in different localities, and in multiplied combinations. That the terms are employed in this third sense, is manifest. ‘The kingdom of heaven,’ or the ministration of the gospel, ‘is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind ; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away.’ *Matt.* xiii. 47, 48.

Here we learn, that the same gospel net encloses the clean and the unclean ; all are alike caught in its meshes ; all are privileged with religious instruction ; but all are not converted and prepared for heaven ; and, at the end of the world, a fearful and final separation will be made between them. We read of the ‘kingdom of heaven’ in the parable of the sower ; we there see that, in the same field, the wheat and the tares, (a kind of degenerate wheat—*Barnes*), ‘grow together until the time of harvest, the end of the world.’ Real Christians

and nominal professors, enjoy the like means of grace ; but the former ripen for the garner of the Lord, and the latter for eternal fire. Matt. xiii. 24-30. 'Then the son of man 'shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his 'kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, 'and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matt. viii. 12. The ungodly are in this general kingdom of God, or they could not be cast out of it.

The like distinction between the visible and invisible, or the general and spiritual, church, we find in different parts of the New Testament. In the parable of the ten virgins, it is palpable. All were bridemaids, but only half of them were divinely wise, and permitted to join in the marriage feast ; the rest were foolish, and shut out from the coveted banquet. Matt. xxv. 1-13. On the same floor lie the wheat and the chaff, ultimately to be separated by the fan of the Messiah, at the end of the world—the former being appropriated to his own use, and the latter cast into the flames. Matt. iii. 12. In the same great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth ; 'some to honour and 'some to dishonour.' 2 Tim. ii. 20. 'Every branch in me 'that beareth not fruit, he taketh away ; and every branch that 'beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more 'fruit.' John xv. 2. Here are barren branches in Christ, to be lopped off. How in him, but through baptismal dedication ? and why taken away, if regenerated by the Holy Spirit ?

The general scope of these phrases, figures, and illustrations, and of many others, of like import, in the New Testament, unmistakeably indicates, that 'the kingdom of 'God,' or 'the Church of Christ,' may be viewed in a large, broad, or indefinite sense, for all who are initiated into the religious system of the gospel, and continue to profess its creed and attend its altars, and who are thereby distinguished from avowed infidels, idolaters, or the open devotees of any antichristian form of worship. 'In short,' says an intelligent clergyman, 'this is not that universal church of Christ, 'dispersed throughout the world, consisting of the whole 'company of Christians ; in which "many are called, and few 'chosen.'" But his invisible church is his peculiar people, 'who are called his redeemed, his sheepfold, his bride, his 'elect, his election, the house of God, the temple of God, the 'body of Christ, the habitation of God, and the like, whereby 'their peculiar interest in the Saviour is shown.' Our

deduction is, that all who were baptized unto Moses, in the Jewish dispensation, were members of the ancient kingdom of God; and that all who are still baptized unto Christ, are members of the kingdom of God, in the wide sense of that expression.

Our opponents seem to entertain the idea, that to be 'of a kingdom,' that is, to be subjects, members, or constituents of it, people must possess a very considerable amount of patriotism, loyalty, intelligence, and, certainly, be of adult age. This evidently is their notion in reference to the constituents of the kingdom of Christ. But, on reflecting a moment, we perceive, that the entire population—with the exception of a few aliens or foreigners sojourning awhile among us—are of our British kingdom. All owe allegiance to its sovereign, are amenable to its laws, and entitled to its protection and privileges. Of this kingdom, children constitute an important part—are as really and as much a portion of it as any adults in the land. A kingdom without children never existed. When a kingdom was named by Christ or his apostles, it was in the sense usually attached to the language. Nearly half the subjects of the kingdom of God of old were infants and children; and so they are now. Through their baptism unto Christ, they become enrolled among his subjects, they are legislated for, and receive manifold advantages. In a word, they are placed in the same relation to Christ, the King of his church, as the home-born children of British parents sustain in respect of the kingdom in which we reside. Israel constituted the kingdom of Jehovah; all the circumcised and baptized were of it. Some were good and some were bad; some were old and some were young; but still all were of the kingdom of God. This kingdom now embraces all within the pale of the visible church, or the assembly of professed Christians—all who regard Christ as their King, and his laws as their directory, and who themselves and their families look to him for his mercy and salvation.

Since the terms, 'the kingdom of God,' and 'the church of God,' are essentially synonymous, in the New Testament; it follows, that, as infants and unregenerate persons pertain to this kingdom, they must equally pertain to the *Ecclesia* or general church; and, being in the church, their baptism may be taken as granted—unless it can be proved, that persons may become canonical members of this *Ecclesia*, church, or congregation, without any baptism at all. This, few or none of our opponents would admit. A judicious writer

justly observes: 'The argument, then, is conclusive, in whatever sense we take the kingdom of God,' [whether the invisible or the visible church.] 'For our Lord, having in one place declared, that the little children should be brought to him, because, of such is the kingdom; and another, that except any one is born of water, or baptized, he cannot enter the kingdom, it most evidently follows, that infants are capable of being born again of water, or baptized; because, else, they could not enter into this kingdom, into which our Lord here expressly declares they do enter, and are admitted.'

Mr. J. Stennett observes, when our Saviour says, 'Of such infants is the kingdom of heaven; if he means, the kingdom of glory belongs to such' [infants], 'tis a principle the Anabaptists do not, in the least, deny. And if he means by the kingdom of heaven, the Christian church, they grant, that those who resemble little children, in docility, humility, innocence, and the virtues, are interested in the kingdom of grace.' (p. 102.) He plainly intimates, that the children, themselves, are not interested in this gracious kingdom—being good enough for the kingdom of glory, but not for the kingdom of grace in this world! He evidently puts such a construction on the language of our Lord, as his disciples never would have done—unintentionally indicating, that Christ spoke equivocally, and sadly misled their unsophisticated minds. How hardly pressed with the difficulties of this passage, must so good a man have been, to arrive at such an unnatural conclusion!

Further, all who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost belong to the invisible or spiritual kingdom of God, and are entitled, not only to the teachings of its ministers; but, also, to enjoy the highest privileges and prerogatives of accredited members, the fellowship of believers—the communion of saints, at the table of the Lord, in particular Christian societies—when their spiritual state is properly developed, and when they have attained a sufficient age and understanding to partake of them, and to conduct themselves consistently with the claims of the gospel on their hearts and lives. For our duties and obligations must ever correspond with our capacities and positions—just as parental claims rest on parents, and filial ones on children, and on no others.

Mr. Maclean, referring to Mark x. 13-16, says, 'Here are children brought to Christ, declared of his kingdom, and blessed, and thus becoming visible subjects; yet we read



‘nothing of their baptism.’ *Lect.* viii. p. 82. But might not their baptism have preceded this gracious declaration and blessing? When Christ said to Peter, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona,’ he did not baptize him! When he conferred the blessing of sight on the blind, and of pardon on the sinner, he did not baptize them! Besides, these children were not brought to Christ, that he might baptize them, but, simply, that he might bless them; for it must have been generally known that he personally baptized no one. Mr. Tombes says, ‘The reason of repelling “the infants by the disciples,” is not known; but, by conjecture it is probable, ‘this bringing of little children was troublesome to them, ‘either because it did interrupt Christ’s speech about marriage, ‘and fitness to the kingdom of heaven, or, because they sought ‘rest in the house, or because they did think this bringing would ‘be in vain.’ *Exer.* p. 17. Doubtless, many children were brought to Christ, that he might heal them; but it does not follow, that he was opposed to Infant Baptism, because he did not baptize them also and at the same time.

Further, our opponents recognize none as visible subjects of the kingdom of God who have not been previously baptized in water; and, as these little ones were recognized as visible subjects of this kingdom, their previous baptism, according to Maclean, is undoubted. Nor were the above picked, or especially selected, babies. Doubtless, any others, had they been brought to Christ in the same way, and for the like purpose, would have received a similar benediction. If the language of Christ have any clear import, or express any benevolent purpose towards infants; they certainly were considered by him as being a part of his gospel kingdom, just as children had been a part of the kingdom of God before his incarnation. He did not expel them from their high and holy relative position; but confirmed and continued it; nor did his apostles excommunicate these little interesting subjects from their former honours and advantages. Hence, their present ecclesiastical standing, and their right to Christian baptism—the introduction to religious privileges—is fully confirmed.

When speaking of the visible church, congregation, or kingdom of God, in this world, as being imperfect; of course, we mean, the members and subjects of which they are constituted; and not those laws, rules, doctrines, and promises, which form the statutes of the reign of Christ on the earth. Whatever defects are found in the former, there are none in

the latter. As the head of the church, the King in Zion, is infinitely wise, holy, and merciful; so are all his laws and ordinances. In this light especially, the kingdom of God is not of this world; neither are the principles and affections wrought by his Spirit in the hearts of his people. They are from above, and divine in every particular, from the highest enactments to the minutest regulations. His laws are not to be abridged nor enlarged; nor can they be improved by any human sagacity or care. What is written we are to receive as from God, in order to become perfect in every good word and work. Fearful penalties are denounced on those presumptuous mortals, of whatever political or ecclesiastical position, who attempt to mend the institutions of Jehovah, or who disregard his infallible and imperious declarations.

It would not be more preposterous to attempt to rearrange the movements of nature, regild the orbs of light, or remodel the perfect structure of human beings, than to labour to improve the laws of God. The imperfections we have alluded to, are found only in the persons, and in the societies, which we call Christian; and which require only a closer adherence to the word of God, more holiness of heart and life, and more love to Christ and his cause, to become consistent congregations of the Lord. I may here notice Carson's distinction between the ancient and the gospel economies. 'The nation of Israel was the kingdom of God as the letter; the church of Christ is the spirit of which the other was but the letter' . . . . Israel was an elected people; but they were only types of the true election.' p. 222—making God a mere political governor of the Jews! Like many other far-seeing adversaries of Infant Baptism, he felt, that if God's kingdom under the law were spiritual—embracing all ranks and ages of the people—it would be difficult to keep the young ones out of God's spiritual kingdom now. Hence, the former must be viewed as merely a political institution, and its members related to him, just as the Romans were to Julius Cæsar! This doctrine our opponents must fully and clearly establish, or their attacks against Infant Baptism can never be successful.

Dr. Halley's observations on this topic are worthy of serious consideration. 'If infants are members of the kingdom of heaven, they ought by the officers of the church to be recognized in that relation. They are not, indeed, members of a particular church or Christian society, for that is formed by the voluntary act of Christian men, and every man joins any such society—any one of several in his neighbourhood—on his own

‘election, and is received on the approbation of its members. Were he rejected by them, he would not be expelled from the kingdom of God. Were all these particular churches dissolved, the kingdom of God would remain a kingdom which cannot be moved. Who will say there was no kingdom of God in Britain, until Robert Brown gathered a congregational church? Indeed, men must be members of the general kingdom before they are eligible to the particular church, if the church be composed only of professing Christians. But how is an infant to be recognized as a member of the kingdom of Christ? Is not baptism the proper recognition of a member of Christ’s kingdom? And if we refuse to baptize an infant, do we not virtually disown him as if he did not belong to us, or to our kingdom? If we refuse to acknowledge a relation which a child has to Christ’s kingdom, do we not despise one of these little ones, depreciate its privileges, and act the part of the disciples, in refusing to allow parents to bring their children to Christ, in the only way in which infancy can be brought to him?

‘Infants have all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, they are redeemed from death; they are entitled to everlasting life; their interest in Christ is sure and certain, until they forfeit it by wilful transgression. If they cannot have faith, they do not need it; if they cannot have repentance, God requires it not from them. They have a title to heaven, clear and incontestible, which no man can abrogate, and no church has a right to gainsay. They are bought with a price, with no corruptible thing, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the grace of the gospel, as well as we? As the infant Jew was the recognized subject of the kingdom of Israel, so every infant is a recognized subject of the kingdom of heaven, and recognized by no less authority than that of the King himself. Shall we refuse to recognize any whom Christ acknowledges? or shall we invent a new ritual of recognition, by which we may, after our own manner, receive an infant in the name of a disciple? Shall we deny the sign of water, where Christ has declared the party to be in possession of all our water signifies?’ Pt. ii. p. 64, 65.

QUESTION VIII.—*If the Old and New Testament churches were essentially the same, wherefore the re-baptizings under the gospel?* or, in other words, If the Jews had been baptized into the true church before the appearance of John, why

initiate them into the church of Christ, as though they had not been baptized into the religion of God previously?—The answer is simple, and easily stated. A worshipping people, though not formally organized nor systematically officered, at least, as far as the sacred writings inform us, had existed from the time of Abraham to the exodus of Israel. Then, an advance was to be made; an improved economy was to be instituted. Arrangements, simple and minute, were to be introduced, for the moral, political, and spiritual benefit of the Hebrews. All this was to be marked by a solemn inauguration into these higher duties and privileges. Hence, this universal baptizing and consecration of the Israelites unto Moses in the sea; and, again, previously to the solemn giving of the law on Sinai. John the Baptist commenced a new era in the church, and announced the near approach of a still further development of God's signal benevolence to mankind. Then there was another general baptizing of the nation, to prepare the way of the Lord, or the people for his reception. The early baptisms of our Lord's own disciples, it is most probable, partook of the like nature and design. And when a full and perfect manifestation of God's great and merciful scheme of salvation was to be made, after the death of Christ, again, all who would submit, were baptized unto the Son of God.

It required, not a new church, but, simply, a new dispensation, or a fresh revival of the old, to induce an additional consecration or purification, in order to become members of the progressive and enlarged system of religion. The Mosaic purifying and dedicatory baptism answered for the Hebrews, till the time of John. That of John and of our Saviour's disciples, answered till the resurrection of Christ. And when the work of redemption was finished, and the church was to be perfectly organized, a third baptism was administered to the proselytes of this fully-completed system of religion. Thus, in the same religion, in its progress to completeness and perfection, we have three specific administrations of baptism. The first, for the Hebrews into the Mosaic church; the second, for the Jews, into the intermediate church, prior to the Redeemer's ascension to glory; and the third, into the complete system of the gospel. And as we expect no purer or higher economy of grace in this church, we do not anticipate any other general material baptizing, or water-baptism, into a more perfect system.

We have had baptism unto Moses; baptism to the ap-



proaching Messiah; and, at last, baptism to the ever-glorious Trinity. Beyond this there is no aspiring. Throughout all, the mode of administration and the moral characters of the subjects, have been just the same. But the consecrations have been to systems gradually advancing, and to names progressively glorious in their development. John re-baptized those who had been baptized unto Moses; and Paul, with all our Lord's disciples and apostles, most probably, baptized afresh those who had been baptized by John. It is admitted, by our intelligent opponents, that the proselytes to Judaism, from the gentile nations, were baptized on being received into the general or particular fellowship of the Israelites. These proselytes of the gate and of justice are believed to have been very numerous in the time of Christ and his apostles, and to have been found in various parts of the Roman world—or, at least, wherever the Jews resided and built a synagogue. And, further, it is unquestioned that great numbers of these Jewish proselytes became converts to Christianity, and were baptized into the profession and discipleship of faith in Christ. Here, then, to say the least of it, we have a double baptizing of the same persons in their onward course to religious perfection. We, therefore, conclude, that our views of the identity of the church, in all ages, from its first formation, are not, in the slightest degree, invalidated by the successive baptisms unto Moses, unto Christ at hand, and to the adorable Trinity. And, further, that as children were certainly baptized into the church or congregation, in and from the days of Moses, for initiation or reinitiation, we cannot understand why they should not have been baptized into the church or congregation of Christ, as aforetime, and should not be so now and for ever.

I may add, in illustration and confirmative of our doctrine on this head, that, in the Hebrew church, successive covenants were made with Israel, to which the people consented, and the laws and precepts of which they were bound to observe. There were progressive manifestations of the divine good-will to mankind. But, a new church was not constituted with every new covenant, any more than a new nation is formed with every new king, or every new act of parliament, or every revolution or fresh form of government, or than a new Christian fellowship is instituted every time a new rule or regulation is written in its books. The ancient church, as far as its externals were concerned, underwent various alterations, and enlargements in the days of David, and especially when Solomon built his temple; but the church, in all its essential

characters, continued the same. Now, when the last divine covenant was given to the church, making no exception of infants, who had been included in every former covenant; surely, their right to all the privileges of the church, which had been enjoyed for, at least, two thousand years, are not to be tamely surrendered by their natural guides and ministerial overseers.

The re-baptizing of the same persons, under peculiar circumstances—against which, Dr. Ryland says, he can see no very great objection, (p. 27)—is not without a modified parallel in another consecrating ceremonial. Dr. Davidson, in his excellent lectures on ‘The Ecclesiastical Polity of the ‘New Testament,’ remarks, ‘Prayer, and the imposition of ‘hands, were not peculiar to an individual entering on the duties ‘of the ministerial office. They were used on many occasions. ‘When one engaged in a special enterprise, he was commended ‘in this manner to the grace of the Most High. Paul was ‘an apostle before he was set apart at Antioch, in connexion ‘with Barnabas. The spirit of apostolic times and precedents ‘sanction a renewed use of the ceremony, when an office-bearer, already ordained, enters on a new work, or a new ‘sphere of labour. It is our opinion, that imposition of hands ‘and prayer, may be employed repeatedly, with reference to ‘the same person, should the circumstances of his life harmonize with the repetition.’ p. 193. By the way, though our opponents, like ourselves, are only baptized once with water, it is no unusual thing for them frequently and fervently to pray for a renewed spiritual baptism, or the fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost on their own souls, and on those of their devout fellow-worshippers.

SECTION ELEVENTH.—*The baptisms unto Moses and unto Christ, were both in the form of cleansing, washing, or ceremonial purification.*—That water was the element usually employed in ancient baptisms, will not be doubted; and that it was applied to the person, by pouring or sprinkling only, I think has been satisfactorily proved in ‘*Modern Immersion ‘not Scripture Baptism.*’ John and the apostles of Christ used pure water in their initiatory rite. The like was used by Jehovah in discipling the Hebrews, ‘baptized in the cloud ‘and in the sea’—the natural vehicle and reservoir of water. Had not water been the material of this baptism, they might have been initiated unto Moses at Succoth, before they left Egypt, or in the wilderness of Shur, soon after their eman-

cipation from the dominion of Pharaoh. Why is the apostle careful to inform us that it was done when there was 'much 'water'—vastly more than John found at Enon—though we feel assured that no person was actually dipped or immersed in it; but because pure living water was essential to its administration? It would be as incongruous to speak of an initiatory physical baptism without water, as to speak of the Lord's Supper without the elements of bread and wine, or of a burnt sacrifice without a victim.

Dr. Gill and others suppose, that the cloud, as it passed from the rear to the front of the camp, 'let down a plentiful 'rain upon them, whereby they were in such a condition as if 'they had all over been dipped in water.' This, by the way, was rather an unlikely thing to be done to a people travelling, with their babies in their arms, and their goods of all descriptions on their backs! Haste was the order of the moment; and how would their movements have been impeded, had their persons and flowing apparel been as wet as if they had been dipped into water, or as we usually say, 'dragged through a 'river!' With what difficulty do some persons, after being immersed in a baptistry, in their long sticking cloaks, make their way to the adjoining vestry, though but a few yards distant? It is hardly probable, that God, who divided the sea to make dry land for the people, to walk upon 'dry shod,' should pour a deluge of water upon them from the clouds above, and placing them 'in such a condition as if they had 'all over been dipped in water!' But let that pass. I make the above citation to show, that, in the opinion of the Doctor, as in that of Mr. Stovel, and of others previously given, water was the element used in this great baptizing. I believe there is no instance recorded in Scripture of this initiatory rite of baptism being administered, except by water, either mentioned or implied—that being the ancient and the natural element of physical purification.

This historical fact is highly instructive and impressive; teaching us, in symbol, what is verbally and repeatedly told us in the doctrinal portions of Scripture—that all human beings are morally and spiritually unclean and corrupt by nature; and that we must be divinely washed and sanctified by the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, of which water is the usual emblem, before we can be genuine Christians here, or enter the kingdom of heaven after death. It also evinces, that before persons can canonically attend the sacred school of divine wisdom, to learn and become conversant with

the sublime and gracious mysteries of our holy religion, they must be formally consecrated to such a holy scholarship, and be symbolically cleansed from the pollutions of their previous natural condition. As the priests must wash their hands and feet at the brazen laver, before they could enter the tabernacle or temple, to serve the Lord ; so, with the consecration of the mind to God, there must be the sign or symbol of that sanctification, which is required of all who enter even the humblest school-room of the Christian commonwealth.

As, then, all children are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, are as ignorant of God and of their duty to him as the brutes that perish, and have within them all the latent elements and principles of a subsequently increasing vicious impiety ; they too must be formally purified, and officially introduced to the privileges of a religious education. If baptism must precede Christian training, in the case of adult idolaters and polluted heathens, because of their uncleanness, it should also precede the regular instruction of all destined to be young disciples in the laws and religion of Christ ; because, by nature, they are as really defiled as the unconverted worshippers of Baal. As the playful innocent whelp of the lion has all the innate properties of its ferocious parents ; so the dear little ones, we press to our bosoms, have brought into the world all the seeds and incipient elements of every vice that disgraces the man, and which, if not prevented by spiritual conversion, will ultimately destroy the soul for ever. The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, are as truly needed by them, prior to their early admission to glory, as by the oldest and guiltiest sinner alive.

I must not overlook the suppositions of one or two writers I have met with, that the baptism in the Red Sea, unto the Mosaic economy, was an initiation without the application of water ; though, it is conceded, to have been a consecration, as clear and complete, as if the element had been actually employed. But, in support of this conjecture, neither the reference of Paul, nor the narrative of Moses, affords us the slightest testimony. But, even had it been so, it would not, in the smallest degree, affect our argument in support of Infant Baptism ; since it concedes a perfect initiation, as if by water-baptism, of all the young, as much as of all the old, to the Mosaic dispensation. By that act, whatever it were, which Paul calls baptism, and which must have been a perfect substitution for baptism, they would have been laid under



obligations to attend to *Moses*, as their teacher, the same as if the element had been really used ; or, as much so, as the Corinthians were laid under obligations to receive the doctrines and perform the duties of the gospel, by their initiation to Christianity with water. This must be true, or the argument of Paul would have amounted to just nothing at all. Indeed, it seems, that, for the apostle to have referred to a baptizing without water, while he is admitted, by all parties, to have baptized the Corinthians with water ; would have been, in every way, inconsistent with all legitimate reasoning. There is no doubt, that his Corinthian readers understood him to mean, that the different baptisms were, at least, in respect of the element employed, performed in the same way. We shall conclude, therefore, that the baptism of the Hebrews was certainly with water. That the contrary cannot be established, is unquestionable.

The only circumstance assignable for the assumption, that water was not applied to the Israelites in their baptism, is that it is *not expressly asserted by the sacred historian to have been poured or sprinkled upon them, or that they were actually immersed in it.* This, however, is of no weight in the argument. Few instances are found, even in the New Testament, where the use of water in baptism is expressly recorded—though its invariable application is universally conceded. John baptized with water ; and the Eunuch, Cornelius and his family, are also stated to have been baptized with water. But, no other person, that I recollect, is literally said to have baptized, or to have been baptized, with this element. The disciples of Christ, prior to his crucifixion, though they baptized more than John, are not said to have used this element in their administrations. In the account of the baptisms on the day of pentecost, no water is mentioned ; neither is it noticed in the records of the baptisms of the Samaritans, nor of Paul, nor of Lydia, nor of Crispus, nor of the Jailor, nor of Stephanus, nor of the Corinthians ; nor, in fact, of any others, beside those mentioned above. Consequently, we have no more literal and positive evidence, that water, or any other material element, was employed by the apostles of Christ in baptizing, (with the forementioned exceptions), than we have, that the Hebrews were baptized in the Red Sea, without the use of water. And we should be as fully warranted to aver, that nearly all the baptisms of the New Testament, were dry baptisms, as that those of the

Old Testament, especially that unto Moses, were but dry dedications to God.

There were spiritual baptisms with the Holy Ghost without water; but that of the Hebrews was not with the Holy Ghost, as their subsequent folly and crimes too fully evince. There was the baptism of suffering; but this, certainly, was not administered to the joyous Israelites in their crossing the channel of the Sea. Paul is speaking of an initiatory baptism, to a people conversant with the baptism of water; and he, thereby, gave them to understand that water was the element used in the case of the Hebrews, the same as in their own. His mentioning the cloud and the sea, as conjoined with this ceremony, evinces that he understood, not a dry or a figurative baptism; but such as he himself and his colleagues had administered to the people. In a word, wherever official baptism is mentioned in the Scripture, an element is always expressed or understood—as water, oil, or blood. The word is interchangeable with that of purifying, cleansing, washing, anointing, &c.; and, therefore, supposes that water or some other liquid was employed. Nor let it be supposed, that there was an insuperable difficulty in God's baptizing the Israelites with water in the Red Sea; for with him all things are possible and easy. The objection would be more forcible in the mouths of our opponents, were it asserted that there must have been a dry baptism on the day of pentecost, because the difficulty of dipping three thousand, in the city of Jerusalem, was all but, if not really, insurmountable—though to sprinkle ten times as many might have been readily accomplished. Nor is there any more ground for saying, that the baptism to Moses was figurative, than for assuming that the great circumcision to God, in the days of Abraham, was figurative also.—I shall now make certain observations on water-baptism, which I trust the reader will not deem too lengthy in comparison with their importance in this controversy.

OBSERVATION I.—*The washings, sprinklings, purifications and anointings, under the law were, in their nature and results, actual baptisms.*—This is rendered apparent by the apostle's expression:—‘There were,’ [among the Hebrews,] ‘divers washings’—*diaphorais baptismois*—divers baptisms. Heb. ix. 10. Every person and thing was regarded as unclean and unfit for the service of God, till sanctified by some purifying element; or, in other words, till baptized. If, after the

first purification, the subject became unclean, he, she, or it, must undergo further, and even many subsequent purifications. It is true, the term baptism is not used by the original writers of the Old Testament, because the Hebrew language contains no such word. But equivalent terms are employed, indicative of purifying the polluted, and of setting apart what was thus rendered ceremonially holy, to the use and service of Jehovah. The instances, on this head, are so plain and decisive, that no one, moderately conversant with scripture, will venture to dispute them.

The Baptist author of 'Eugenio and Epenetus,' says, 'It is manifest, that a number of purifications were common among the Jews, and these are called, in the epistle to the Hebrews, divers baptisms.' p. 122. 'The Jews knew what baptisms were, though the baptism of John, or washing with water simply, as a token of a profession of repentance, was new to them.' *Ib.* p. 123. Mr. Stovel remarks, 'The heathen were baptized when entering into their mysteries and temples; this was heathen baptism. The Jews were baptized when, coming from their markets, or a journey, they entered into their families, and the temple; that was Jewish baptism; but the Christian baptism was an immersion received by persons entering into Christ.' p. 28. Here, two deductions are manifest; first, that if the analogies between heathen, Jewish, and Christian baptism, are sustainable, even in a very general sense, children, when old enough to enter the temple, or, to go to the market, or, to take a short journey, might be baptized by the early Christians. And, secondly, that unless, on every such occasion, men, women, and children, dipped themselves all over in water—to say nothing of being dipped by other people—Christian baptism was not necessarily an immersion. By entering into Christ, of course, we understand entering into the school of Christ, or, for the first time, professing the gospel. 'That washing with water, was a token of a profession of repentance,' is fairly inferable. It was an admission of relative or personal pollution, contracted through violating the laws of ceremonial holiness: for which, transgressors, or their guardians, ought to have been, and probably were, sorry, and received the symbol of purification, like humble penitents; as much so as most that were baptized by John the Baptist.

Every Hebrew, who rendered himself ceremonially unclean, must have been formally purified before he could again enter into the tabernacle, or the temple of the Lord; or, in other

terms, he must have been rebaptized, before engaging afresh in the public worship and service of the sanctuary. When an individual had to be consecrated to some office of dignity or power, such as that pertaining to a prophet, priest, or king; a more costly element was added, and he was baptized also with holy oil, or precious ointment, poured on his head—still more strikingly symbolizing the baptism, or the pouring out, of the Holy Spirit upon him—of course, there was no dipping, immersing, or plunging, in these higher baptizings! When a conscience, pained with a sense of some extraordinary transgression, was to be pacified, the Israelite was sprinkled or baptized with the blood of some fore-appointed sacrifice; thereby fore-shadowing the application of the blood of Christ, which taketh away the sin of the world.

This last allusion, not improbably, sheds some light on the expression of our Lord; ‘I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished;’ alluding to his last sufferings and death, when his own precious blood was shed, and sprinkled upon his own sacred body—the divine victim of the law for the removal of human guilt. This was the highest baptism of all—the baptism of blood. He then bore our sins, which were graciously imputed to him; and by that baptism with blood, he was judicially freed from this imputed guilt, and sanctified to the Lord, as thenceforth perfectly freed from sin. So, virtually, also are those who are in him by faith, obedience, and love. ‘The captain of their salvation was made perfect through suffering;’ ‘by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;’ and ‘they are made white in’ (or through) ‘the blood of the Lamb.’

Water, however, was the ordinary element of purification, or consecration, or, literally, of a Jewish baptism. This, in sufficient quantities, might have been obtained in the wilderness, or in Jerusalem, where no natural springs nor fountains existed, or wherever people could possibly live. It might have been applied to the youngest infant without maternal fear; to the feeblest invalid without danger; to the most refined and delicate without the slightest shock to their modesty; and to the purest garments without leaving an imparted stain behind—beautifully typifying the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, which are adapted to every class and character of mankind, and which, in cleansing the soul, leave no vestige of transferred impurity behind.

The great lesson inculcated universally by the ‘Doctrine of



'Baptisms' is, that all persons and things must be purified, *before* being presented to God, and before they can be accepted and adopted by him. No ceremonially unclean person might appear before God, in his temple, nor worship at his altar—he must be first sanctified. The priest must wash his hands, however materially clean, *before* officiating in the house of the Lord. David says, 'I will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.' *Before* Jacob worshipped at the altar in Bethel, his household must cleanse their clothes, as well as put away their strange gods. *Before* the Hebrews could approach the holy mount, when God appeared to give his law, they must sanctify themselves and wash their clothes. *Before* men could ascend the hill of the Lord, or stand in the holy place, they must have clean hands. *Before* men could bear the vessels of the Lord, they must be clean. *Before* the vessels of the sanctuary could be used, they must be cleansed. Passages of a like purport may be found in numerous parts of the word of God, as every Christian must be fully aware. The entire scheme of the Gospel—its means and ministrations—is to present every man to God, pure, perfect, and justified in Christ Jesus. This great lesson teaches us the following doctrines:—That purification *precedes* presentation to God—and, that he will not accept the unsanctified and unclean—ceremonially, in his kingdom on earth, and spiritually, in his kingdom in heaven. That, before children can be duly and orderly presented to God, they must be cleansed, sanctified, or baptized. Hence, in baptizing infants, we perform the rite, before we offer to God the prayer of dedication. To consecrate our offspring to the Lord, without this sign of purification, would be like offering to him the impure and unclean. To delay their baptism for years, would be to defer their proper dedication to the Lord all that time—or be like postponing circumcision of old, till the children were grown to youths or young men. And, finally, we infer, that our Baptist brethren violate the laws of heaven, by not formally consecrating their infants to God, or by doing it without their previous symbolical cleansing in water-baptism.

A distinction is occasionally made, between *Initiatory baptism* among the Jews, and the *baptism for Uncleaness*. The baptism at the Red Sea, baptism in conjunction with circumcision, and the sanctification or baptism at Sinai, have been regarded as initiatory; while the purifications consequent on ceremonial defilement, through touching a dead body, and the like, have been viewed as baptisms for uncleaness.

But, though the occasions were different, the objects were substantially the same, in their subjects, modes, and designs. *Initiatory baptisms* were intended to place the parties, originally out of the church or congregation, or of a particular economy of it, into a position of membership for the *first time*; laying them under obligations to learn the divine will, and to live in obedience to the revealed laws of God. This was not only the primary, but also the most important act of consecration to God; and, as such, could not be repeated, in respect of the same dispensation. The *baptisms for uncleanness* were designed to restore, or *re-initiate*, those to their former fellowship with the church, or congregation, who had been previously separated from it, on account of some ceremonial defilement or transgression. This, though a secondary, was, according to Paul and our opponents, a real and religious baptism. The difference between the objects of these cleansings, washings, or baptisms, was, therefore, comparatively immaterial. Both recognized the subjects as being previously defiled, and, therefore, without the pale of the church, or congregation of the Lord; and both, by a ceremonial act of sanctification, consecration or baptism, were placed, or replaced, in a position of holy fellowship. Whether you regard the New Testament baptisms as embracing one or both of these acts is immaterial in our discussion—for children were the subjects of both of them.

In truth, baptism is of a double import, comprehending both purification and initiation. And this will hold true in reference to all the baptisms mentioned in Scripture. We know that John's baptism, and that of our Lord's disciples, were initiatory, and yet they were manifestly regarded as purifications. John iii. 22-26. Josephus, in speaking of John's baptism, calls it a 'washing' or purification. *Ant. b.* 18, c. 5, sec. 2. By this expression, he evidently inscribed the current opinion of the Jews in his day. It was viewed as a continuation of the priestly cleansings and consecrations under the law. This being the case, no exception of children, to the reception of this rite, would be made by the harbinger of Christ; while conscious that all his priestly ancestors included them in their divers washings or baptisms. For, surely, a child might, by accident, be made ceremonially unclean as readily as an adult; and would equally require purification, to restore it to its former position in the Hebrew congregation.

This view of our subject being material, I shall cite an authority or two in confirmation of it. Mr. Hall:—'The era

‘of immediate preparation’ [for the gospel dispensation] ‘was distinguished by a ceremony not entirely new, but derived from the purification of the law, applied to a special purpose. Our Lord incorporated the same rite into his religion, newly modified, and adapted to the peculiar views and objects of the Christian economy, in conjunction with another positive institution, the rudiments of which are perceptible in the passover.’ p. 29.... ‘In all probability, the Jews regarded the consecrated use of water’ [by John] ‘merely as an emblem of purification of that reformation of manners to which they were summoned; for to such a use of it they had long been accustomed.’ *Ib.* p. 189. Mr. Noel:—‘The manner in which this practice of the first disciples is here mentioned,’ [John iv. 1-3], ‘without any recorded command of Christ, before his disciples had been called by him to any ministry, while they were yet very partially instructed, without the slightest comment by the evangelist upon the nature of the transaction, shows that the disciples were simply imitating the practice of John and the custom of the country. It follows, that their baptisms resembled, in its general character, the baptisms of the priests and the baptisms of John.’ p. 61.

Doddridge:—‘It is strange to me, that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, that is, by *washing*; when it is plain, from express passages in the Jewish law, that no Jew, who had lived like a gentile for one single day, could be restored to the communion of their church without it. Compare Numb. xix. 19, 20, and many other precepts relating to ceremonial pollutions; by which the Jews were rendered incapable of appearing before God in the tabernacle or temple till they were washed, either by bathing or sprinkling.’ *Fam. Expos.* Other quotations, of similar import, the reader will find in subsequent pages. Now, in none of these purifications were children made an exception; as the silence of our opponents fully admits.

It is worthy of remark, that while both the initiative and re-initiative baptisms, or the first and following purifying and consecrating ceremonials, were continued among the Jews, till the termination of their economy; the latter were virtually done away among the disciples of Christ; at least, this is the general belief—as the practice of protestant Christians plainly intimates. The initiative was a symbolical removal of *native or original defilement*, and accompanied the first consecration

of the person to Jehovah. The re-initiative was a symbolical removal of *subsequently acquired ceremonial pollutions*, accordant with the Levitical institutions of the Hebrew nation. The truth of this statement, I believe, no one questions. That there was an initiative consecration of the Hebrews to Moses in the Red Sea, Paul assures us. And that there was an initiative baptism of proselytes to Judaism is fully admitted by all our intelligent and candid opponents; and, indeed, it is too manifest to be denied by any who have fairly examined the case. This primary institution was established before the giving of the law, and, of course, before the Sinaic appointment of the purely ceremonial cleansings of persons and things, during that legal economy. Its perpetuation under the gospel dispensation, is a matter admitting of no question with those who now believe in water-baptism at all. We base our present baptismal rite on this primitive baptismal initiation, and recur to the Levitical baptismal purifications simply as illustrative of our positions, and in confirmation of our views, on the subject; just as we refer to ancient infant circumcision to meet many of the objections of our opponents. From them we, at least, learn that children, young and ignorant as they might be, had the capacity of undergoing, and frequently if required, a rite which bore all the leading features of purification by water, and which the inspired apostle designates baptism—though it might not be initiatory, nor for the symbolical removal of original or natural defilement.

OBSERVATION II.—*A regular initiatory baptism of infants to Moses, under the law, has great probability in its favour.*—Hebrew children, whose parents were among the holiest in Israel, were corrupt and sinful by nature. They all had the germs and seeds of human depravity in them. And, without the regenerating influence of the divine Spirit, could not have lived a life of holiness here, nor have entered the kingdom of God above, when they left the world—though it were within a day after their birth. They were naturally as unclean as any man who had been defiled by touching a dead body, and who must have been sanctified by baptism, before he could be regarded as of the congregation of the Lord. It, therefore, comports with the entire genius of the Hebrew economy, that they should be duly sanctified by baptism, before they would be recognized as clean persons and members of the great sanctified church of Israel. As many thousands of infants were baptized in the Red Sea, the baptism of their infant progeny afterwards seems highly probable, if not absolutely



essential, to comport with the spirit of their holy economy. That parental baptism did not supersede Infant Baptism in the Red Sea, we have previously established. We also know that the circumcision of the father did not prevent the circumcision of his sons—Abraham and his male offspring having undergone the operation at the same time. When a man was proselyted from heathenism to Judaism, his male seed, though but eight days' old, as well as himself, must be circumcised; and all the male descendants of those infant proselytes, from generation to generation, must have received in themselves the like sign of initiation to the Abrahamic covenant. It is certain, too, that the baptism for uncleanness, administered to the parents, did not render the like baptism to unclean children needless. When the latter were personally defiled, they must be personally purified; as much so as if their progenitors had never undergone such a process of sanctification.

It in no measure militates against the idea of the circumcision and the baptism of male infants being continued together through the Mosaic dispensation; 'That as both rites, in certain leading particulars, symbolized the same spiritual operations; therefore, both of them were not necessary, in the case of the same children.' We know there were different kinds of sacrifices offered continually, from the days of Moses to those of Christ; while the leading design of all of them was the same. Those males who were baptized in the sea, had been previously circumcised. The male proselytes to Judaism were both circumcised and baptized. All the males baptized by John, with the exception probably of the Roman soldiers, had undergone the ceremony of circumcision before. One rite did not supersede or affect the other under the law; and both were doubtless observed by the Christianized Jews a long while under the gospel. Consequently—to say nothing of the female infants, who, of course, were not personally circumcised at all—the administration of this rite, symbolizing the renewing of the heart, spiritual regeneration, and the sanctification of the soul to God, the same as was done by water-baptism; would, in no degree, render the latter nugatory or useless. They would naturally keep pace together, and alike teach the great lesson of infants being devoted and holy to the Lord, with double emphasis, till the setting up of the gospel economy in the world. Besides, as Carson remarks, there were certain points of difference between them, which rendered them both equally

useful and essential in the former system of the religion of heaven.

The laws of Moses (Lev. xii. 1-6.) pronounced the mother of a man-child unclean seven days, and of a maid-child two weeks, after their respective births; 'and rendered all who 'touched her unclean;' *Scott*; and, of course, not excepting her infant offspring. In the former case, she was to touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, for thirty-three days; and in the latter case, not for sixty days; when she was to be deemed purified, or rather, was to undergo the rite of priestly purification. Now, as you 'cannot bring a clean 'thing out of an unclean,' it seems to follow, that new-born children must be deemed as unclean as the maternal parent, and would require some formal religious purification or baptism on or before being presented unto the Lord in his sanctuary, with the accustomed offerings, immediately after the days of the purification were accomplished. See Luke ii. 22-24. It may be also worth notice, as corroborating our view of the uncleanness of new-born children, that every creature was considered unclean for a whole week after its birth. 'Likewise 'shalt thou do with thine oxen, and thy sheep: seven days it 'shall be with the dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it 'me.' Ex. xxii. 30. That the primitive believers did not deem their individual baptisms sufficient for all their posterity, to the remotest times, is, we believe, a truth which none of our opponents are disposed to controvert; and also that this general practice was based on that of their Hebrew ancestors, is admitted by the most intelligent and competent among them. The inference is, a very high probability in favour of the doctrine, that all the infants in Israel were baptized, or consecrated to Moses, soon after their birth, during the entire period of Judaism.

If the recent customs of the Jews, in this respect, afford an explanation of the practice of their ancestors, baptism always *accompanied* the rite of circumcision. In the *Modern History of the Jews*, it is said, 'Before the infant is circumcised, he 'is carefully *washed*, and laid in clean clothes, because no 'prayers can be offered for him, while he is defiled.... An 'empty seat is always provided for the Prophet Elias, who, 'they suppose, comes to occupy it; because the Jews have a 'tradition among them, that he is always present at the '*baptizing* of every child'—evidently identifying this washing with baptism. *Faiths of the World*. This affords an explanation of Mr. Tombes' assertion, previously given, 'That

'baptism was a concomitant of circumcision, if not ancients, and that it was in use among the Jews for many years together with circumcision.' Dr. Gale admits that baptism attended circumcision; but followed rather than preceded it. All natural born Jews were washed with this baptism, except only females, who, not being circumcised, were not washed till they had contracted pollution some other way; and this plainly intimates that there was a baptism thought necessary on account of circumcision, or some pollution contracted thereby.' p. 266. At any rate, the union of the two rites is plainly admitted.

Corroborative of this conclusion, it may be remarked, that no infant or child could have been formally and personally consecrated to the Mosaic economy but by baptism; at any rate, no female children could be otherwise initiated to his religious teachings and its advantages. Males were circumcised under a prior covenant, and so became devoted to Jehovah as the God of Abraham; and that only once in their lives, whatever uncleanness they might incur, or whatever sins they might individually commit, in the Hebrew camp or country, during their entire existence. If young females were to be personally and ceremonially devoted to Jehovah, as doubtless they were, it must have been by purification or baptism; for to them no other initiatory ceremonial was open. It can hardly be conceived, that for, at least, fifteen hundred years, no female children were individually and personally dedicated to the God of Israel. It is admitted, as we shall presently prove, that all the female, as well as the male, children of proselytes were baptized, and so consecrated to the Lord under the gospel; and we cannot imagine that the female children of God's own original people, naturally as unclean as their infant brothers, and as the offspring of converted idolaters, should not be privileged and distinguished in the same manner. Indeed, as just hinted, no person of either sex was devoted to Moses, or inducted to his religious system, any more than to Christ and Christianity, except by water-baptism. Circumcision continued throughout the Jewish polity, but, like sacrifices, it had no peculiar or necessary connexion with Moses and his Levitical institutions. As a distinct operation, it existed long before he had a being; was 'of the fathers' before him; was practised by other nations; and is still continued among their descendants; though the temple is no more, and all the sacrifices have legally ceased. Women and children were included in the original baptismal

act and covenant of the Red Sea, and in all the subsequent general covenants God gave to his people ; and were thereby placed in the same position, relative to the law, as their circumcised husbands and fathers.

In this relationship they continued up to the period when their Levitical system was really or virtually destroyed. Into this covenant they were not brought by personal circumcision, but only by baptism. Into this covenant also, we have reason to assume, they were brought, not simply in virtue of their relation to the other sex, as in the case of circumcision ; but by baptism, administered to themselves when they were infants. That, under the Levitical economy, females were personally and officially initiated to the Mosaic law, at some period or other of their lives, or rather, before they were permitted to be present in the sacred assemblies of the Lord, appears all but certain. The only question is about the manner, and the time of doing it. That it was by washing, purifying, or baptism, is unquestionable. And that the time was in infancy or childhood, is hardly to be doubted—no particular, or no other, period of life being specified ; and that of infancy, is, on many grounds, the most reasonable, and, therefore, the most probable. Nor is this probability, when there is no evidence opposed to it, to be slightly rejected. Our opponents admit that proselyte baptism existed among the Hebrews, not from any instance of it recorded in the sacred narratives ; but simply because it was most probably done, was a reasonable service, and accorded with the spirit of the Levitical system ; and, therefore, to be acknowledged as undoubtedly true. That the purification, consecration, or baptism of infant Israelites is equally in the spirit of that system, and was as probably administered, I think the intelligent and candid reader will as readily concede.

As additional proofs, that infants, among the Jews, were baptized under the Hebrew dispensation, it may be noted, that while no females could have been initiated unto Moses except by baptism ; we are assured, that if any children, of either sex, were ever virtually consecrated to him, during his lifetime, it must have been by baptism. From the day that the Hebrews left Egypt, till they had entered into the Holy Land, no circumcision had been administered to any one. ‘ Now all the people that came out ’ [of Egypt] ‘ were circumcised, but all the people that were born in the wilderness, by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, these they had not circumcised.’ Josh. v. 5. Hence, during forty years, the entire period of the personal guidance and government of



Moses, no child, infant, or young person, had been officially or formally dedicated to God—except by baptism. Consequently, those persons who had not been baptized in the sea, because they were subsequently born in the wilderness, could not have personally broken the baptismal covenant, nor have committed the specific and aggravated offence with which Paul charges them, unless they had been baptized. Whether any of these children did actually offend, and fall under the wrath of God, except in the case of Korah and his company, we are not informed. If none of them did so sin and suffer, it is far more remarkable than that they were not baptized.

As all the people, old and young, who came out of Egypt, required baptism—for otherwise we are sure God would not have baptized them—so all that were born in the wilderness first, and in the land of Canaan afterward, would, as far as we can judge, have required baptism also, and to be brought under, and bound by, the like baptismal covenant, equally with those who were baptized in the Red Sea. Why, moreover, were the children of baptized proselytes baptized, but because they required it, and because it was a custom in Israel? If the consecration of the Jewish adult answered for his offspring, why should not the consecration of the believing gentile suffice for his offspring also, seeing that, in point of moral nature, they were on a par, and were all to be treated alike—in all religious institutions and rites? But the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost did not suffice for all or any of their posterity; nor that of the apostolic age for all or any coming time. Wherefore, we doubt not, that baptism was regularly administered to all Jewish children, and to all the children of those who, under the Christian economy, became the members of the congregation.

Further, there can hardly be a question, that multitudes of children were born in the wilderness, and died—not like the family of Korah and his company, by the manifest judgments of heaven—but in the usual course of nature. It would have been a miracle, sure of a divine record, if such had not been the case. If we suppose, that, at the lowest calculation, half a million of children were born and died in the course of the forty years, during which the Hebrews wandered in the desert; we shall not be deemed extravagant in our estimates. Now, none of these were dedicated to God by circumcision; for we are expressly told that this rite was suspended during all that long period of time. Then, were they not formally consecrated at all to God before they left the world? Were

half a million, or even any of them, so neglected by their parents, by their priests, or by Moses, that they lived and died—between the ages of eight days and forty years—without being devoted to the Lord, or, in some required form of initiation, inducted to the congregation of God; and that, too, when numerous ceremonies were duly administered, when even the tabernacle, and its utensils were baptized before used for God, the High Priest washed and anointed before he could officiate at the altar, and every unclean Jew purified or baptized before he could join in their social gatherings? That appears so improbable, so irreligious, so contrary to all we know of God's institutions, in the wilderness, that we cannot, for a moment, admit the possibility of it. And if they were ever officially and formally devoted to God, it must have been by water-baptism, (for then there was no other rite of consecration used among them); and the time in which they received it was unquestionably in their infant years. The suspension of circumcision, during their frequent and uncertain movements and wanderings in the wilderness, may readily be accounted for; just as the suspension of the Passover, under the like circumstances, for want of adequate flocks to supply the feast. But, dry as the wilderness was, water for sprinkling the people, however numerous and frequently, was always at hand, or they could not have existed a week.

As shown before, it is no valid argument against these assumptions, based on such high probabilities, that it is not expressly affirmed that infants were baptized in the wilderness, and during the subsequent period of the Mosaic dispensation. All reasonable men concede the existence of facts and operations, during long spaces of time, which are neither fully narrated, nor even once noticed by historians, sacred or profane. It is nowhere recorded in the Old Testament, that a child was ever taught to walk by its parents, or to talk, or to behave courteously; but every one believes such instructions were constant and universal in Israel, because the necessity of the case ensured them.

Dr Halley remarks:—‘According to the command given to Abraham, every male child must have been circumcised before it was numbered with the people. As baptism and circumcision accompanied each other, if they were baptized at all, the inference is undeniable, that they were baptized as they were circumcised, in infancy. Being circumcised, they were deemed proselytes, and there was no subsequent time in which they could have been offered for baptism.

‘Numbered with their parents in infancy among the children of Abraham; they must have received the rites of initiation if they received them at all, when they were admitted into the visible church or kingdom of Israel. The child of a Hebrew was initiated in infancy; the child of a proselyte would be initiated at the same age. How should baptism be deferred when circumcision was performed? The child, as well as the parent, would need be purified from the uncleanness of living as do the gentiles. Indeed, among the Jews there was no rite peculiar to the adult proselyte. According to their rule; as was the parent, so was the child. Independently, therefore, of the express testimony of their authorities, we may infer that the Jews, as they circumcised, so they baptized the infants of proselytes,’ [as they did their own,] ‘and received the household with their parents as initiated into the covenant of Abraham. The probability of the thing, combined with the express testimony in its favour, places it, we think, beyond any reasonable objection or doubt.’ Pt. I. p. 124, 125.

I have adduced the foregoing arguments in support of the doctrine, that babes were baptized during the entire Hebrew Commonwealth, in order to supply, as far as able, the connexion between the baptism in the Red Sea, and that of John in the Jordan. How far my remarks have sustained the assumption, the reader will judge for himself. I have attempted to establish it, not as a point materially affecting the controversy between ourselves and our Baptist opponents. They would not deem it important to disprove, that, if baptism was administered to infants and children in the Red Sea, it was not reiterated in the wilderness. Convinced of the former, they would probably concede the latter, or lay but little stress upon a denial of it; unless they discovered unequivocal evidence to the contrary. Hence, also, if it can be proved, that the apostles really baptized children; it would be no question of moment with our opponents, were we to adduce ample testimony evincing that succeeding ministers of the gospel followed their example—unless the New Testament had given an explicit commandment, that the rite was to be limited to the times in which the apostles lived. On the other hand, could they prove, to a certainty, that none but believing and regenerated adults were baptized by John and the immediate followers of Christ, and that it would have been wrong then to have acted otherwise; they would feel, and rightly too, that no other class of persons should subsequently

participate in the service. Still the inquiry is interesting. To show, that after the baptism of infants in the sea, and long before that practised in Jerusalem, the rite, most probably, was uninterruptedly administered to infants, by the ancient priests and people of God, must gratify the mind, if it do not confirm the faith, of all sincere Pedobaptists.

OBSERVATION III.—*The baptisms under the gospel economy were a continuation of the purifications, consecrations, or baptisms under the law.*—To this point, viewed in another aspect, we have previously adverted. But the question requires a more general consideration, in order to determine, as clearly as possible, the practice, first of John the Baptist, and then of the disciples of our Lord. I have already cited several testimonies in corroboration of our proposition; to these the reader can easily recur. I may add a few more to the like effect. Dr. Gale:—‘It cannot be denied that the ‘words (Baptism, &c.) may very reasonably be understood of ‘those legal washings. . . . That the Jews, on account of several ‘kinds of pollution, used to purify themselves, cannot be ‘questioned; the divers washings (Gr. Baptisms) mentioned ‘in the epistle to the Hebrews (ch. ix. 10) make it incon- ‘testible. And it is plain enough, that upon some such ‘notion, they were washed after the sore of circumcision was ‘healed’—that is, when in a state of infancy. p. 265. Dr. Gill:—‘There were divers bathings, baptisms, incumbent on the ‘Israelites, and so upon such proselytes who were upon an ‘equal footing with them, and equally under obligation to ‘obey the ceremonial laws, which consisted of divers washings, ‘baptisms. . . . yet none of them for proselytism,’ [Qy?] ‘but ‘for purification from one uncleanness or another in a ‘cermonial sense.’

Mr. Noel:—‘When our Lord commanded his disciples to ‘go and disciple all nations, baptizing them, they had already ‘been in the habit of baptizing. . . . As he indicated then no ‘change in their practice, it would continue what it had been ‘before; and as no earlier directions respecting the rite are ‘recorded (than John iii. 26; iv. 1, 3), but it is simply stated ‘that they baptized, we have reason to think that they ad- ‘ministered the baptism to which as Jews they were accustomed. ‘The simple record that they baptized must be understood to ‘declare that they did so according to the common recognized ‘practice. The use of the word “baptize,” as a term generally ‘known, and which called for no explanation, proves that it ‘must be understood in its common sense. Had the external



‘act of baptism, when that rite was administered by the apostles, differed materially from the external act of baptism practised by the Jews,’ [either as to the mode or the subject], ‘the difference would have been explained, to prevent mistake in successive generations. And since there is no explanation whatever, we may conclude that the apostles administered baptism after the manner of the Jews.’ *Mode*, p. 54, 55. ‘Various Jewish washings were emblematical of the purification of the soul,’ (*Ib.* p. 113), in which case it symbolized with baptism under the gospel.

These declarations, of such highly respectable and influential Antipedobaptists, will have their due weight with many of their brethren of the same denomination. But the doctrine will be further confirmed, in the opinion of certain Pedobaptists, at least, by the judgment of two or three men of mark in their own ranks. Ainsworth:—‘Baptism was nothing strange to the Jews, when John the baptist began his ministry. Matt. iii. 5, 6. They made question of his person that did it; but not of the thing itself. John i. 5.’ Lightfoot:—‘When the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used [among the Jews], ‘as appears among incontestible evidence from their writers, there need not be express assertion that such and such persons were to be the subjects of baptism, as it was as well known before the gospel began, that men, women, and children were baptized as that the sun is up’ [when it shines on us.] ‘The baptizing of infants was as well known in the church of the Jews as ever it has been in the Christian church.’

Neander:—‘John made use of baptism as a symbol of preparatory consecration to the Messiah’s kingdom; a course to which he might have been led by the lustrations common among the Jews, and by the intimations of prophecy, such as Mal. iii., Zech. xiii., Ezek. xxxvi. 25, even if the baptism of proselytes, was not then extant among the Jews.’ *Life of Christ*, b. iii., ch. i., sec. 35. I will just subjoin the reasoning of Mr. Fleming:—‘Though we have not now, in the Jewish code any very particular and express account of the ceremonials of the *Proselyte’s* admission; yet we may, by a just analogy, conclude, that since washing was appointed for the legal purification of a *defiled* Jew, it was but reasonable to expect that the same purifying rite should be applied to a gentile convert, who was looked upon by them as naturally defiled, and, therefore, as bearing some likeness in his condition to a Jew, under legal pollution and uncleanness.’ *Plea*, p. 27.

Calmet:—‘The baptism of proselytes was practised every day in Israel.’ *In loc.*

Quotations to the same purport might be made to almost an indefinite extent. That Christian baptism is a continuation of Jewish baptism, few, after looking carefully into the subject, will deny. The apostle declares these washings to be *baptisms*; and when he made the statement, he knew well what it imported, and how it would be understood, by, at least, all the Christianized Israelites. There might be slight differences in the administration, but enough would remain in these ceremonies to identify them as real and genuine baptisms, and to warrant the same common designation of them all. This view of the connexion of the Hebrew and Christian baptisms appears to be the only one entirely free of all but insurmountable difficulties. Christian baptism was undoubtedly a continuance of some foregoing ceremony practised by the priesthood, and well known to the Hebrews in the time of John, who, though he administered it on a larger scale than ordinary, and in circumstances calculated to excite unusual attention, he evidently did nothing with which the entire people were not quite familiar.

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When our Baptist opponents refer to Hebrew purifications, as the precursor and prelude of baptism, by John and the apostles, they assume one thing, and keep another out of sight. *First*, they assume, that all the baptisms were by dipping; and, *secondly*, they forget to tell us, that children were the subjects of the ceremony equally with adults. The practice of immersion, Mr. Noel thinks, was founded on the following law in the Mosaic code:—‘The clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord.’ *Mode*, p. 55, 56. That this conclusion is fallacious, I think, I have proved in the work on the Mode of Baptism. Does Mr. Noel believe in *se* or self-baptism? When he himself was immersed, he did not adopt this method, nor is it practised by any in his communion. Mr. Robinson, in his ‘History of Baptism,’ says, ‘That among the Jews, no person ever dipped another, a proselyte washed himself, but that is not baptism.’ p. 36. Mr. Gibbs remarks, ‘The circum-

'stance of one man's dipping another, who had passed through all the forms requisite to a full admission into the church, had nothing answerable to it in the whole history of Judaism.' p. 274. And yet, it seems, a ministerial dipping of a believer is warranted by a Jewish layman dipping himself! Ceremonial baptism was ever deemed a transitive act—something done by one person to another—by the minister to his people, or by the clean person to the unclean. The only act in this cleansing that can be regarded as baptism, is the clean person sprinkling upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. John and the apostles did not command their converts to baptize themselves; but they did it to or for them.

The Lord's commission does not run, 'Go disciple all nations,' then, after they have dipped or baptized themselves under water, teach them all things whatsoever I command you. The whole act of baptizing was to be administered by Christian officers. The converts were not enjoined to go to the water or into the water; but merely to be passive subjects of the ordinance. Children, and even babes, were liable to ceremonial defilement; and if the purification were by dipping or washing one's self, perhaps, our good opponents can tell us how these little folks immersed or washed themselves in water. All that the most earnest advocates of dipping could fairly claim from any baptism of the Jews, is, that the minister should first sprinkle his candidates and then send them to a reservoir of water or a river, to bathe themselves and wash their clothes. Let it not be forgotten, that 'the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.' Heb. ix. 13. Here is a full and complete ceremonial purification by sprinkling alone. Many other texts teach the same doctrine.

The method of purifying or baptizing, by sprinkling or applying the cleansing element to the unconsecrated and unclean, appears to arise from the circumstance, that the ceremonially holy could not touch the unholy without polluting himself. This, I believe, was a universal Levitical law. The unclean must be first purified before the clean person could come in contact with them, unless they would change their relative ceremonial positions. This being true, the clean person could not dip or wash the unclean, because he could not do so without touching him, and, thereby, defiling himself. And it is observable, that in no case of purifying or baptizing, is the administrator of the rite ever said to touch the purified or baptized: a plain intimation that there was no dipping or

immersing one another in these rites. And this accounts for the fact stated by Gibbs and Robinson in the above quotation. That the like principle operated under the New Testament, whose first adherents were Jews, fully acquainted with, and accustomed to, their ancient rites of cleansing and consecration, appears at least highly probable. Let me add, that to found immersion baptism, chiefly or solely, on the supposed sense of the verb *baptizo*, as is done by Mr. Carson and others, is utterly fallacious. It has been proved, beyond all fair disputings, that to wash, pour, or sprinkle, is conveyed by the word as clearly as to immerse.

I may be here allowed, by way of further digression, to notice a fact of some little interest to ecclesiastical antiquarians, respecting the mode of baptism. It has been repeatedly asserted, that sprinkling is of very recent date in this country, and that it arose in the time of the Protestant Reformation. This, at least, is not universally correct. Mr. Tremén, in his *History of Architecture*, says, 'The earliest font, probably, in Great Britain, is that recently discovered by Mr. Hadfield in Castle Rising. It was found incased in the more modern one of the celebrated churches of the twelfth century, and had evidently been brought there from the much earlier church of the castle. It has a square base, two feet three diameter, with circular shaft, one foot ten diameter, and a basin, one foot nine in diameter in the clear square sunk to the depth of nine inches and half. The whole is perfectly plain.' And it is as perfectly plain that when this most ancient font in England was made and used, infant sprinkling was not a thing totally unknown in this country. 'The reformers,' says Mr. Budd, 'knew no baptism but that of infants, and therefore prepared no service for adults; that was a subsequent provision' [in 1622.] p. 235.

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I just now remarked, that when our opponents refer to Baptism of any kind and in any place, or for any purpose, under the Hebrew dispensation, they never, for a moment inform you that children, as well as adults, were the subjects of it. Mr. Stovel does not appear to have seen, or imagined, a child among the multitudes that were baptized in the Red Sea, though there must have been several hundred thousands present! Drs. Gale and Gill are equally unconscious of the existence of the children who were baptized because of some ceremonial defilement, during the whole period of the Jewish polity! Mr. Noel witnesses these Jewish baptisms, among



the original stock of Abraham, and administered to many heathen proselytes; but so lofty are his observations, that scarcely in a single case does he discover any subjects below men and women—who, of course, left their little ones among the priests and people of heathenish idolatry, or somehow smuggled them into Judaism, without their undergoing the legal rites of initiation! And why are these young ones so seldom mentioned or noticed, as of deep interest and importance, by our good friends in this inquiry? The reasons are manifest.

To tell their readers that God himself baptized, probably, a million babes and children in the Red Sea; that the Jews baptized children, if not immediately after birth, or when eight days' old, at least whenever any of them happened to become ceremonially unclean; that whenever heathen parents became proselytes to the Jewish religion, which was of frequent occurrence, and occasionally on a large scale, their children, however young, were baptized as well as themselves; would have been too dangerous and damaging a disclosure and concession to their simple-minded readers. These might have fancied it not very improbable, that when John baptized *all the people* of Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and when the apostles consecrated vast numbers of proselytes to Christianity, children were baptized also! This might the more easily have happened, after being repeatedly told, that John derived his baptism from the Jews; that the disciples of Christ followed the example of John; and that the concise commission of Christ was given on the assumption, that the apostles would understand him as enforcing a practice, of which they had read and seen much, and in which the children always participated with their parents! Our good brethren were far too cautious explicitly and openly to betray their cause by any such directly damaging expositions.

Mr. Gibbs, doubtless, speaking the opinion of many of his brethren, says, 'It is a fact in which we glory, and which our 'opponents, with all their sophistry cannot refute, that the 'directions for the observance of Believers' Baptism, and the 'arguments for its support, are to be found' [only] 'in the New 'Testament.' p. 230. Let the reader of the preceding remarks, say, whether this assertion, or, at least, the impression it is designed to make, can be fully sustained? Where are the full directions in the New Testament for the observance of baptism? How was it to be done? Who was to do it? And

what were the results? Are full directions, without numerous assumptions or inferences, afforded us by Christ or his apostles? Mr. Noel very properly answers, No. Then, as to Believers' Baptism; what faith was essential to meeten men for this ordinance? Did it consist of a mere mental or intellectual admission of the doctrines of revelation, as spoken by Christ and his inspired followers? or did it necessarily include the belief of the heart, the faith of God's elect, which overcometh the world, and saves men from the love and dominion of sin here, and from all condemnation and suffering hereafter? It surely does not require much sophistry to refute this notion, in which Mr. Gibbs, and his like-minded defenders of exclusive Believers' Baptism, so much glory. As this controversy progresses, the more intelligent and clear-headed of his own persuasion will gradually perceive that baptism, like many other matters mentioned in the New Testament, cannot be clearly understood, except by calling in the assistance of Moses and the holy prophets of old. It is quite amusing to notice, that while many of our brethren recur to the Old Testament for guidance in matters of doctrines, duties, and religious forms, with the deepest interest and confidence; no sooner do you refer to the same authorities for light on the proper modes and subjects of baptism, than the Bible is thrown aside as a thing of nought; and they greatly glory in the supposed fact, that they are not beholden to it, for any help on this important question!

OBSERVATION IV.—*All proselytes from heathenism were baptized before being fully admitted to the Hebrew congregation.*—The following remarks are designed as continuous arguments and evidences given under the preceding observations.—I observe, that, if the lineal seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the heirs of the promise, must be baptized before they could be duly constituted 'the church in the wilderness,' even though all the males had been previously circumcised to the Lord; we may confidently infer, that no descendants of Ishmael, Esau, or of any other profane or idolatrous progenitors, would be permitted to join in the sacred solemnities or congregations of Israel, and draw near to God in his synagogues, tabernacle, or temple, without undergoing this heavenly instituted purification. The opinions which the Hebrews, as a people, entertained of the moral and ceremonial pollution of the heathen, may be gathered from Ezra's address to the Jews, in order to induce them to put away their strange wives. 'And now, O our God, what shall

‘we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets,’ [Josh. xxii. 19,] ‘saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land, with the filthiness of the people of the land, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to the other with their uncleanness.’ Ezra ix. 10.

That the pious Hebrews regarded gentile idolaters with dislike and contempt, passages all but innumerable fully testify. David’s disdain of Goliah, the uncircumcised Philistine, is fully to the purpose. 1 Sam. xvii. 26. Frequently are the Israelites warned against having social, and especially religious, intercourse with the heathen natives around them, or with any persons among them, till separated and purified, according to the divinely instituted ordinances of the ancient laws of God. The like feelings evidently pervaded the minds of the Jews in apostolic times. The reluctance of Peter to visit Cornelius and his family, because they were uncircumcised gentiles, is apparent in the records of that interesting event. ‘Ye know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation.’ Acts x. 28. On one occasion Paul was in danger of being killed by the Jews, because he had brought certain supposed uncircumcised Greeks into the temple. *Ib.* xxi. 28-30. The enmity of the Jews against the Samaritans is notorious. In the case of such unclean people, purification was indispensable, before being admitted to join with them in the worship of the Lord.

It is hardly questionable, that the contentions, originating with the Christianized Jews, mentioned in Acts, chap. xv. arose from the fact, that the gentile Christians were admitted to share the religious privileges of the early churches, without being circumcised as well as baptized. These people were deemed so bad, that one divine rite of admission was not regarded as sufficient to remove their heathenish pollution; especially when two were required of the proselyte to Hebrewism; and also in the case of every male child among the Israelites. ‘It would be strange and unaccountable,’ says Mr. Godwin, ‘if the law that was binding on the native Jew, was not also binding on the gentile proselyte. Can it be supposed that a Jew, until purified, was excluded from the society of his countrymen, and from the religious privileges which were his birthright, on account of a single act, producing ceremonial defilement; and that the gentile, who had often done the same thing, was not excluded also

'until purified in the same way? Would a Jew require this purification after merely touching the unclean gentile, before restored to his religious privileges, and would the unclean gentile be admitted without this purification to participate in them? The supposition is most unreasonable. Not only is it contrary to the spirit of the Jewish people, and to the design of their ceremonies, but it is opposed to the express injunction of the law, which required that the gentile 'should be treated as a Jew.' p. 72. I may just add here, that after a heathen had been fully proselyted, and inducted to Judaism, by baptism and circumcision, he appears to have been regarded, in a religious point of light, as a perfect Jew. Acts ii. 10. No distinction, but in name, if always in that, ever seems to have been made between the original and ingrafted branches of the parent stock. See *Lewis' Ant.* v. i. p. 33.

'On the subject of Jewish baptism,' says Dr. Halley, 'I am disposed to take still higher ground, and to say, although there was no positive enactment of Moses' law, according to which, proselytes from the gentiles were baptized, yet, the requirements of that law rendered a baptism, a purification of water, absolutely necessary, before a gentile could be received into the communion and society of the Jews. If this were the fact, Jewish baptism, though not expressly ordained by God, is, by the necessity of the case, of divine authority. Whatever is absolutely necessary to be done, in order to observe a command of God, is, in effect, commanded, as well as the deed which is expressly enacted. If we advert to the ceremonial pollutions of the Mosaic law, we must acknowledge that the gentile nations, without a single exception, were perpetually unclean....Is it to be supposed, that a gentile, who desired to associate with Israel, to be received into their families, to sit at their tables, to eat their holy things, to sacrifice at their great altar, to worship in their national temple, would not have been compelled to submit to the same purification as the Jew, who returned from a single feast in the house of a gentile?' *Pt. i.* p. 114, 115.

Some of our opponents reject the authority of uninspired Jewish historians and commentators, who assert the prevalence of proselyte baptism among the ancient Jews; doubtless, foreseeing the damage, the admission of it might do to their own views of Infant Baptism. But, the thing itself is so reasonable, and the act so essentially in keeping with the economy of that peculiar people, that one could hardly think it possible for any intelligent person to deny or doubt it, even



though not a single Jewish Rabbi ever wrote a line respecting it. If it be conceded, that the washings under the Levitical dispensation were baptisms, either initiating or purifying; then, surely, the persons who came from a state of heathenism to join the Israel of God, must have been baptized. To admit, as our opponents do, that there were baptisms or purifications of the unclean Hebrews, and not of heathen proselytes, about to enter into even the remotest communion with the sanctified in Israel, seems to us truly surprising and unaccountable, and so it must be to the more intelligent of our reverend opponents themselves. Concede the point, that there actually were proselytes to Judaism, and you cannot, with even the shadow of a reason, deny their purification or baptism. Indeed, these ceremonial baptisms of Jews and gentiles stand on the same basis, exhibit the same aspect, and convey the same evidence in favour of Infant Baptism. Prove the one, and you establish the other. Make it plain that the Jewish washings were baptisms, and you render it evident that proselyte baptism did exist among the Hebrews—without the slightest reference to the declarations of the Rabbis.

I have previously cited several Baptist writers, whose language fully concedes the fact of proselyte baptism. A few further quotations, or a recitation of passages previously quoted, will show the reader something of the nature and extent of these admissions or declarations. Mr. Stovel:—‘That the Jews should baptize themselves after a contact with the heathen, and not baptize a heathen when he was initiated, would seem strange. The baptism of a proselyte is, moreover, retained unto this day, and practised just in the same way which would seem to be implied in the words of Holy Scripture.’ p. 67. Mr. Tombes:—‘To speak exactly, baptism (I do not say the sacrament of baptism) was a concomitant of circumcision, if not ancients. For it is well-known that baptism was in use among the Jews, in the initiating of proselytes for many years, together with circumcision.’ *Exam.* p. 89. Mr. Booth concedes that the children of proselytes were baptized along with their parents. v. ii. p. 177. Mr. Noel:—‘As the heathen were unclean, they were obliged, before they could be admitted into association with the Jews, to be bathed or baptized; and this baptism was required of every proselyte,’ [children as well as adults.] *Sub.* p. 46. ‘Every one was familiar with the baptismal rite, every one talked of it; it admitted proselytes into communion with the Jews; it admitted converts into the company of John’s

'disciples; it was administered to the disciples of Jesus.' *Ib.* p. 10. 'The Jewish women who resorted to the *proseuche*, 'or chapel' [with Lydia,] 'on the banks of the stream, accused as they were to the immersion' [rather affusion] 'of female proselytes by the hands of Jewish priests,' [for, now, they do not baptize themselves!] 'would witness the spectacle 'with solemn emotion.' *Mode*, p. 102. 'These considerations 'and testimonies go far to show, that the baptism of proselytes 'was practised by the Jews in the time of our Lord.' *Ib.* p. 58.

The Rev. G. Jackson remarks, 'There was a dispute 'between Dr. Hammond on one side, and Mr. Seldon and 'Mr. Tombes on the other side, concerning the children of 'natural Jews; yet, all agree, that the infant children of 'proselytes were baptized; and that it was a common phrase 'with them to call such infants, proselytes, as well as their 'parents.' p. 34. Bishop J. Taylor, the great oracle of certain Baptist writers, observes, 'That this rite of admitting 'into mysteries, and institutions, and offices of religion, by 'baptisms, was used by the posterity of Noah, or, at least, very 'early among the Jews, besides the testimonies of their own 'doctors, I am the rather induced to believe, because the 'heathens had the same rite in many places, and in several 'religions; so they initiated disciples into the secrets of 'Mithra; and the priests of Cotytto were called Baptae, 'because by baptism they were admitted into the religion.... 'A proselyte is called in Arrianus, *Bebammenos*, *Intinctus*, a 'baptized person.... But this ceremony of baptizing was so 'certain and usual among the Jews, in their admitting prose- 'lytes, and adopting into institutions, that to baptize and make 'disciples are all one.... The Jewish baptisms admitted 'proselytes to Moses, and to the law of ceremonies.' *Works*, vol. i. p. 115. Stovel:—'The initiating immersion' [rather aspersion] 'certainly was used before the time of our Lord by 'heathen communities.' *Dis.* p. 85. Burroughs, another Baptist writer, admits, that proselyte baptism 'contains what 'is of the greatest importance in the controversy relating to 'this practice of baptism.' p. 42. In fact, of so great importance is it, that being once universally admitted, and its consequences fairly drawn, Infant Baptism must be deemed fully established; and the controversy between the Baptists and their opponents must speedily terminate.

Mr. Noel asserts, that 'the disciple of the priests renounced 'idolatry, conformed to the Jewish ritual, and was baptized; 'the disciple of John confessed his sins, avowed his belief

‘that the Christ was at hand, and was baptized.’ *Sub.* p. 60. But, admitting all this, in neither case does it seem, that regeneration of heart was required, as essential to conformity; and, as the priests received the children into the Mosaic church by circumcision and baptism with their parents; John, also a priest, without a divine prohibition, could do no less. He proceeds, ‘If a heathen wished for Jewish baptism, he ‘must renounce his idols, profess his belief in the divine ‘authority of Moses, and promise obedience to the Mosaic ‘laws: would John, then, baptize a Jew, unless he renounced ‘his sins, and professed belief in the approaching advent of ‘Christ, with his intention to keep the commands of God? ‘What he had ever seen demanded in the initiatory rite of ‘the more carnal religion, he would not dispense with in the ‘initiatory rite which was to enrol men under his ministry, ‘as expectants of the Messiah.’ *Ib.* p. 52. For the sake of argument, we will also admit the statement and the inference to be true and fair. But, how does this exclude infants from John’s baptism, when it admitted them to Jewish baptism? Would John reject those whom his predecessors were ever accustomed to baptize? The heathen confessed, and was baptized, he and all his straightway: and if the two baptisms are essentially alike, the Jews also confessed, and were baptized by John and our Lord’s apostles, they and all theirs straightway! Lewis says, ‘It is *most certain*, that ‘they baptized children, and, generally, with their parents; ‘and if the parents were dead, the consistory of three took ‘care of their baptism.’ vol. ii. p. 460.

As previously remarked, in all probability, heathen proselytes to Judaism were very numerous, especially in the days of David and Solomon, as well as in later ages of the Hebrew Commonwealth. In the time of Esther and Mordecai, many of the people of the Persian empire became Jews, probably proselytes of righteousness, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. Esther viii. 17. In this case, all the males would be circumcised and baptized, and the females simply baptized, according to the laws and traditions of Israel, even though no record of the rite is furnished us; for they could not have been recognized and received as *Jews* on any other terms. That this and all proselytisms embrace children with the adults, we gather from the fact, that the stranger or proselyte was to be put on an equal footing with the Israelites themselves. ‘And ‘when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the ‘passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised,’ [which

rite included the baptismal act] ‘and thou shalt let him come ‘near to keep it; and he shall be as one born in the land; ‘for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law ‘shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that ‘sojourneth among you.’ Ex. xii. 48, 49.

That all these strangers were baptized, though nowhere recorded, is indisputable; as our foregoing remarks have fully shown. We have here, then, Infant Baptism, because we have infant proselytism; and that, too, even in the time of our Lord. Mr. Noel truly admits that ‘a proselyte and his ‘children were admitted into the national covenant,’ *Sub.* p. 43; and he might have added, by water-baptism. This was the point to be established; and this having been effected, Infant Baptism is placed beyond the reach of any successful assault. Further, as all proselytes, though baptized at their first initiation, were subsequently to be dealt with, in all cases of personal defilement, as those that were home-born; it follows, that, as all the infants existing at the time of the Exodus were baptized with their parents, and whenever afterwards they were ceremonially defiled; so every infant, entering Israel from a heathen land, must have been first baptized with its parent, and re-baptized whenever it subsequently became unclean.

‘As a proselyte and his children were admitted into the ‘national covenant’ together; it follows, that it was, in both cases, by the like rites and ordinances. If heathenish pollution, without baptism, prevented the father from enjoying communion with Israel; it equally prevented the unbaptized mother and children, male and female, from all such fellowship. Now, unless we assume, that the little folks, proselyted from the gentiles, were to be entirely deprived of all the religious privileges of the youthful Hebrews, it is certain, that they must have been purified the same as their parents. What rendered the cleansing of the seniors essential to religious fellowship in Israel, the same rendered the cleansing of the juniors essential to their enjoying the same advantages—just as the regeneration of a child is as requisite to its entering heaven, as the regeneration of an old man. But, we find, that the fully proselyted stranger and his family were to be placed on the same spiritual footing as native Israelites themselves; and, therefore, as the Hebrew children were blessed with a participation of religious means and mercies; so where the children of sanctified gentiles. It is, therefore, demonstrable, that as adult proselytes were cleansed, washed, or baptized, so their



offspring underwent the like ceremonies. And, as it is admitted, that John the Baptist and the disciples of Christ followed the practice of their fathers, in the case of proselytes and their children; so we have indisputable evidence, that they baptized proselytes and their children into their new economies of religion. Either the premises of our opponents must be bad, or the inference we have drawn is inevitable, viz.:—that the apostles of Christ baptized all the children of those parents whom they proselyted to Christianity.

The practice and prevalence of Jewish and proselyte baptism, up to the time of John the Baptist, and during the ministry of our Lord, furnishes a key fitted to unlock the mystery of the subject of Infant Baptism better than any other with which we are acquainted. It accounts for the conduct of the harbinger of the Messiah, in baptizing children, though the sacred historian, from the commonness of the act, did not deem it requisite to give us any specific information on the subject. Indeed, without recognizing and understanding the subjects, modes, and designs, of those prior purifications, consecrations, or baptisms, under the law, there would manifestly be a serious want of information on the point—a want even in reference to the right baptizing of any one, and in any way—a want which the New Testament does not elsewhere fully supply, just because it was contained in the Old. John went about the work of baptizing without any recorded instructions given him, respecting its performance, either as to the mode or the subject; and the people submitted to the ceremony as to one with which they were well acquainted. They never asked him what he was doing, as strangers to such a rite surely would have done. Nor did any persons, however opposed to his doctrines and precepts, object to his baptizings, as if they were novel or unscriptural. From the days of John the Baptist to the death of John the apostle, no one ever betrayed any thing like ignorance on this head—a sure proof that the ceremony had been long prevalent, and not lightly esteemed by the Jews. The mystery is cleared up by Paul's reference to the baptism in the Red Sea—the baptism of purification in Israel—and the admitted baptism of initiation of heathen proselytes. It is remarkable, that, while the Jews objected to many other things said and done by Christ and his apostles; while eager to lay hold on any obnoxious word or deed; while sending lawyers and others to catch them in their speech and procedure; we never read of their charging them with violating the laws of Moses, by baptizing the people.

Mr. Stovel's remarks on this point are worthy of transcription; especially as they evince the difficulties in which it involves a clever opponent of Infant Baptism. 'If circumcision 'was a part of the initiation' [of proselytes,] 'then that was 'a circumcision of believers in God under Moses. If oblation 'was a part, that was an oblation of believers in God under 'Moses; and if baptism was a part, that was a baptism of 'believers in God under Moses. If the children were admitted 'with the parent, (which is, by no means, certain,) it was 'because of the parent's faith in God under Moses;' [for the faith of a parent may secure the religious initiation or baptism of his children!]. . . . 'The question, whether proselytes were 'or were not baptized, is of no moment;' [my best mode of escaping a considerable difficulty!] 'the initiation was discriminating; and if baptism was a part of it, the baptism must 'have been discriminating too.' [He means, they baptized only those who were taught the leading truths of Hebrewism, were true penitents, and were willing to become Jews.] 'How 'far, and to what age, the child of a proselyte could be 'received with him, is, though the Jewish was a national and 'hereditary system, very uncertain;' [and it is very undesirable to inquire too much into the matter!] 'but the 'proselyte initiation itself was unquestionably *discriminating*; 'it supposed a character which might be accredited, and it 'imposed a rule of life which was, and must be, a test of that 'character.'

'When the nation' [men, women, and children!] 'was 'baptized, initiated into Moses, being immersed in cloud and 'sea, they entered under an authority, the exercise of which 'was destined to secure the glory of the God to whom they 'were subject. They were not permitted to return. . . . But 'one law was for the proselyte and the home-born Jew. . . . If, 'in conformity with the national and hereditary nature of that 'community, his children were initiated with him, then this 'also must have taken place because of the faith which the 'parent had disclosed.' (*Dis.* p. 69-71.)—Of course, it did; and so it must ever have done in the case of parents who baptize their children to Christ—for an heathenish or idolatrous unbeliever would not bring his child to the font in any country or age. The provisoes, cautions, and expositions, in conjunction with the damaging concessions contained in these citations, fully evince the importance of this part of the controversy, and how gladly the evidence it affords, in favour of Infant Baptism, would be passed over, if it were possible.

In fact, it is passing strange, how acute and logical gentlemen, like Noel, Stovel, &c. with their views of proselyte baptism, so general and up to the very time of Christ, cannot perceive, that they have not a foot of solid ground left to stand upon, in their fight against Infant Baptism !

An anonymous writer, (1757), referring to John i. 25, 'Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that Prophet?' remarks, 'To give light unto the reason of their demand, it must be observed, that it was a well-known and well-established custom among the Jews, when any persons became converts and proselytes to their religion, from among the heathens, to admit them with a becoming solemnity into it, by baptizing them with water, denoting by this significative ceremony the washing away their sinful idolatries and superstitions, and separating them to the worship and service of the true God. This custom was probably derived either from the baptism of Moses, when he purged the whole nation of Israel from those impurities which they had contracted by their residence among the idolatrous Egyptians, in order to enter them into that religion which he was about to establish, by baptizing them in the Red Sea; or, as the Jewish writers assert, from the command which Moses received and executed, just before the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, to sanctify all the people, and let them wash their clothes; Ex. xix. 10, 14; by which rite they were put in order to be consecrated to God, and entered into covenant with him, and prepared for the reception of the divine commandments.'

From the prevalence and even universality of baptism among the Hebrews, we may safely conclude, that John himself had been baptized in his childhood or youth; that our beloved Lord had undergone this ceremony in his early years; and, that all the disciples, both of John and of Christ, had received this ordinance while they were young. They were baptized into the ancient dispensation, like Isaiah and David, if not into that of the gospel, which was not fully instituted till after the Saviour's resurrection. We deem this a reasonable answer to the question often proposed by some persons, 'Were the disciples of Christ ever baptized; and, if so, who administered this rite to them?' They, doubtless, were baptized in childhood to the God of heaven, by the priests or circumcising officers at first, and, probably, by John afterwards. That they had been, at least, once baptized, with the baptism of initiation, is hardly questionable. To reply, that

we have no record of their baptism into Christianity, tells no more against the assumption that they were, than the fact, that we have no record of their washing their hands and faces on a sabbath morning, before going to the synagogue service—we take both of them for granted. Our Lord's baptism at the Jordan was evidently intended for his public consecration and inauguration to the glorious offices he was about to assume—(after the manner of Aaron, who was washed, but surely not dipped, at the door of the tabernacle, in the sight of all the people)—and as an occasion for receiving, in the presence of assembled thousands, the gracious attestations of his Heavenly Father's love and confidence. He was openly consecrated to his kingly, prophetic, and priestly work; and this act is called his baptism.

There is another aspect in this case, confirmatory of our doctrine. Mr. Tombes, in a passage previously cited, says, that baptism and circumcision were both practised together, under the law of Moses. Mr. Noel is of the same judgment: 'The question before us is, not the duty of individuals, but the difference between the nation and the church, viewed as communities owned by God, into which persons were to be introduced, according to the divine law, by circumcision and baptism.' p. 179. When persons of the Hebrew persuasion were converted to Christianity, and admitted to the fellowship of the Saviour's people, many of them, being exceedingly zealous of the law, continued to circumcise their own children, and the proselytes from among the heathen, the same as before the promulgation of the gospel. Great anger was excited, in the minds of certain Christianized Hebrews, against Paul, because he did not circumcise his gentile converts; and because he even went so far as to declare, that the rite was virtually abolished, even among the Jews—though tolerated a good while afterward. This custom, of both circumcising and baptizing, appears to have been of long continuance among the converted Jews at Jerusalem, and also, probably, throughout the Holy Land. And, be it observed, that respecting the circumcision of the Jewish children, the apostle is silent—his manifest objection being against the compulsory circumcision of the children of converted gentiles.—(See *Conybeare and Howson*, vol. ii. chap. 21; and *Taylor's Letter* iii. p. 17).

What is the inference from this fact? That the Hebrew Christians had been previously in the habit of both baptizing and circumcising their children unto Moses, and to the God of Abraham. Now, though baptized unto Christ, they felt no



inconsistency in also circumcising their children to the God of their fathers. It is probable, that, on the same principle, these people, for a good while, also kept both the Jewish and Christian Sabbaths, the passover, and the feast of pentecost, Acts xx. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 8; and did many other things, in conjunction with Christianity, which they had done under the law, even though the latter was virtually abrogated by the new dispensation. To the Jew, Paul became a Jew, that he might gain the Jew. It is not likely, that both these ordinances would have been observed so generally and so long, and that without any authoritative rebuke from the apostles, in their addresses to these Christian Jews, had not the connexion between them been of long standing, and of divine origination. In the course of time, circumcision ceased to be administered, and baptism was continued; just as the observance of the seventh day of the week gave place to the first, among most of the disciples of Christ; and the keeping of the entire passover was lost in the appended eucharistical bread and wine, now constituting the Lord's Supper.

Another point is worthy of consideration: Conybeare and Howson observe, 'The subject of the proselytes is sufficiently important, to deserve a separate notice. Under this term we include, at present, all who were attracted, in various degrees of intensity, towards Judaism—from those who, by circumcision, had obtained full access to all the privileges of the temple worship, to those who only professed a general respect for the Mosaic religion, and attended as hearers in the synagogues.' vol. i. p. 22. Calmet says, 'The Hebrews distinguished two kinds of proselytes. The first, the proselytes of the gate; the other, proselytes of justice.' *In loc.* The former dwelt in the land, mixed with the Jews, and enjoyed many social privileges, for which baptism or purification was unquestionably prerequisite; the latter were admitted into the temple, shared in the holy fellowship of the Israelites, and that upon terms of equality, for which baptism and circumcision were essential. Assuming these to be facts, it follows, that there were two grades of proselytes. The former, only baptized; the latter, both baptized and circumcised; constituting two distinct classes of converts, or, rather, of persons, in the condition of novitiates, and of perfected members, of the Hebrew ecclesiastical body. This distinction, it is supposed, was fully and universally known to all the Israelites; who, consequently, would not deem baptism only sufficient to induct persons into the higher fellowship of believers, whether

under the law or under the gospel, but, simply placing them in the position of novices, to be further trained, and to undergo another rite, previous to becoming recognized and treated like the true or natural seed of Abraham. Does not this view of the subject harmonize with the idea of an outer and inner congregation of believers in the gospel of Christ; and show, that such an arrangement, by the first and following disciples of the Redeemer, would be regarded as only in keeping with the practice of their Jewish forefathers?

Dr. Halley, referring to the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, says, 'A promiscuous crowd of foreign Jews from every nation under heaven, came together, and were amazed as they heard every man in his own tongue wherein he was born, Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. (Acts ii. 8-11.) To this crowd of foreigners, from countries so various and remote from each other, speaking so many different languages, and ignorant of their fathers' tongue, sojourning in Jerusalem only during the few weeks from the Passover to the Pentecost, (many of them having made the pilgrimage but once in their lives,) Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." He assumed that they all knew the meaning of baptism. It seems to have been with them an old familiar rite; as, even if it were probable that, on the same day, they would have submitted to a ceremony, of the nature and meaning of which, they had no previous knowledge, the terms of the address imply that they were already well acquainted with its administration. There was no need of delay, in order to expound the nature or the meaning of the ceremony; "for they that received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—Pt. i. p. 101.

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Without further discussing the subject more especially involved in this second part of our treatise, I shall conclude it by remarking, that I believe the proposition, with which it is headed, has been fully sustained; and I hope and think the intelligent and candid reader will be of the same judgment. It has been contemplated from every point of observation. *Objections* to the doctrine it involves, intimate and remote,

have been stated and duly considered; *Questions* adapted to draw forth its amplest discussion have been put and answered; and *Observations*, likely to lead to the fullest consideration of it, have been made and pursued to, what some may deem, an unnecessary and unwarrantable length. Still with all these discursive remarks, I trust it will be found, that the main purpose of the inquiry has not been long lost sight of, and that the whole has tended to establish the doctrine of Infant Baptism.

Of the concessions of opponents, when manifestly based on truth, and elicited by necessity and incontrovertible testimonies of Scripture and reasons, I have fully availed myself in supporting what I believe to be the revealed will of God in this matter; and the arguments of Pedobaptist writers, sustaining the same doctrine, I have quoted largely, in order to show, that I am introducing no unsanctioned novelties in this controversy; and also to favour the reader with various statements, expositions, and arguments, expressed in language better than any with which I could treat them. I have, in this part of the work, as in the preceding, felt desirous, that the best men, on both sides of the question, should be heard, and that the strongest and best things they have advanced, for and against Infant Baptism, should come under the immediate observation of the reader. In a word, my aim has been, and still is, to prove, that the adversaries of Infant Baptism have not one invulnerable argument, or one unimpeachable testimony, in defence of exclusive adult or believers' baptism, and to show that their interpretations of Scripture, in opposition to our practice, are all erroneous; that their hostile reasonings are all illogical and invalid; and that they have not yet adduced a single substantial and sustainable argument in support of their doctrine. How far my aim shall be effected, the sequel must still further declare.—I shall now proceed to the last leading division of this inquiry.

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### PART THIRD.

INFANT BAPTISM MAY BE FULLY SUSTAINED BY PAUL'S REFERENCE TO THE BAPTISM OF THE HEBREWS IN THE RED SEA.

Having shown that multitudes of Hebrew infants and children were baptized in the Red Sea, and during fifteen hundred years afterwards, and that this baptism of the

Israelites, according to the view of the Apostle Paul, embraced all the essential principles of Christian Baptism; it requires little penetration to see that the doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism may be fully sustained, under the gospel dispensation, from the allusions and arguments of Paul in the passage first quoted from his letter to the Corinthians. We have seen, that, from the time of Moses to that of Christ, it was regularly practised under the form, and in the name, of purification, as an initiation of juvenile proselytes to the privileges of Hebrew children, or as a rite conjoined with circumcision; and as no portion of the Word of God has been found prohibiting, directly or indirectly, the continuance of the like service to infants, under the gospel economy, which retains all the leading principles of the ancient church; as no act of exclusion was ever pronounced by inspiration on the children of believers in Christ, since the Hebrews and their offspring were first taken into covenant relation to God; and as no alteration in the nature, domestic relationship, or ecclesiastical circumstances, of infants, has ever taken place, to warrant their excommunication; we may safely conclude, that they stand in their former position, and are still entitled to participate in all those ancient institutions, perpetuated in the reformed dispensation of the church of God. We have also seen, that there are many plain and unmistakable intimations in favour of Infant Baptism, given in the New Testament writings.

That children stood in the same relation to the former visible church or congregation as their parents; and, as far as they were capable, received the like signs, seals, symbols, and advantages; we think has been sufficiently established. In this same relative position they must be viewed as continuing to stand; unless good evidence be given of their excision, by Jehovah himself, under the gospel dispensation. One Baptist writer talks of God's 'having left children out of their original 'relation to the church, for the first time, when the gospel was 'established.' But he adduces no Scriptural evidence in support of his assertion. Besides, tacitly leaving them out, would not be sufficient. After being in the church, at least, fifteen hundred years; there must be proof of God's having positively and expressly turned them out, in order to establish their Scriptural exclusion now. One thing, however, this writer admits, and which we have been labouring to make manifest, that children were always regarded as being in the former economy or congregation, and as constituting



an essential portion of it, up to the time of our Lord's incarnation. Now, if this be true—and no intelligent and candid student of the Bible will deny it—why, in the name of common sense, should they not remain as canonical members in the congregation of God to the time of its consummation.

Further, as children were formally and officially introduced to the previous general church, or, rather, to the same church in former times, by baptism; why should they not, like their ecclesiastical ancestors, be still introduced to the church or congregation of God by baptism, also, when baptism is the admitted and sole initiatory rite of the Christian system? Wanting divine declaration for their excommunication, there seems to be no more right or reason for keeping children out of the general church of God, or for depriving them of the ceremony and privilege of baptism, after the Saviour's ascension to heaven, than for preventing their worshipping the Lord with their parents, in the sanctuary, or at the family altar; or for denying them religious instruction, or holy examples, or Christian admonitions, or spiritual consolations, or than for keeping females from the Christian passover. They enjoyed all these advantages previous to the coming of Christ; and it appears both needless and sinful to deprive them of any one of them now, unless under the plain and express interdiction of the Almighty. The first converts from Judaism, as we shall presently show, did not believe their children were to be placed in a less favourable or honourable position than they had hitherto filled. On the contrary, they acted like people under the full conviction, that their little ones, as well as themselves, were to be ostensibly and really elevated and benefitted, rather than depressed and injured, by the gospel economy.

Were not the present a question, about which great and good men have long differed and disputed with uncommon zeal and determination; and did we not know that prejudgment closes its eyes and ears, as long as possible, against doctrines adverse to its own former settled convictions and practices; we think we might leave the preceding statements to produce their own legitimate effect, in the mind of the honest reader, without any further remarks on the subject; and without any fear of a conclusion at variance with the doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism. But, as matters now exist, after the agitation of the question, for so long a time; and from the ramification of the topic by multiplied and often irrelevant discussions; it may be desirable to

pursue the investigation somewhat further; to meet other objections against Infant Baptism; and to bring other evidence in defence of it—even at the risk of over-diffusiveness, and the repetition of some of our previous statements and reasonings. Our object is, to establish our position beyond the possibility of all fair refutation; and to place our arguments in such a conspicuous and varied aspect, that, stand where you may, they shall be readily comprehended; and, when duly contemplated, shall approve themselves to the judgment of every intelligent and impartial observer.

Mr. Hall, in his discussion on *Open Communion*, has a passage which I think may be appropriated by the writer in the present controversy, as an excuse for the length of his remarks, and the repetition of many of them. ‘In the militant state of a doctrine, it is generally found necessary to incur frequent repetitions, to represent the same idea in a variety of lights, and to encounter a multitude of petty cavils and verbal sophisms, which, in its further progress, sink into oblivion. When, in consequence of a series of discussions, a doctrine is firmly rooted in the public mind, the proof by which it is sustained may be presented, without impairing its force, in a more compact and elegant form; and the time, I am persuaded, is not very remote, when it will be matter of surprise that it should have been thought necessary to employ so many words in evincing a truth, so nearly self-evident, as that which it is the object of the writer of these pages to establish. The flimsy sophistry by which it is attempted to be obscured, and the tedious process of reasoning opposed to these attempts, will be alike forgotten, and the very existence of the controversy remembered only among other melancholy monuments of human imperfection.’ p. 389.

SECTION FIRST.—*Paul’s reference in the text is to the first great or general baptism ever administered.*—The circumstances attending this baptizing of the Hebrew nation are among the most striking of any recorded in the Sacred volume. The Psalmist, referring to them, exclaims, ‘Thou art the God that doest wonders; Thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The

'voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron;' [and, according to Paul, baptized every one of them.] Ps. lxxvii. 14-20. This manifestation of divine power, in the deliverance and baptismal consecration of the Hebrews to God their Redeemer, is little, if any thing, less than what soon after took place at the giving of the law on Sinai, or at the fulfilment of the law on Zion. The whole is marked as a great and interesting event in the records of the Jews. To it poets, prophets, and historians, frequently recur, as to a grand epoch in the history of that interesting nation. It would be ever memorable in the hearts of the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The affrighted, roaring, and rushing, floods; the clouds discharging their refreshing showers on the passing multitude; the heavens thundering; the lightnings flashing, and sending forth their forked arrows; the earth trembling and shaking; all combine their forms and forces to stamp the occasion as one of deep and enduring interest in the minds of all the people of God. The pomp and circumstance accompanying all the subsequent baptisms, save that of Christ himself, were few and unimpressive compared with that in the sea—just as the giving of the law, a little while after, was accompanied with terror and glory, never displayed on any following communication of the divine will to mankind. But God was baptizing a whole nation to himself, and that event must be attended with the special tokens of the divine presence.

Abraham and his household had long before been taken into covenant with God by circumcision and sacrifice. Whether any distinct ceremony, analogous to purification with water under the law, called baptism in the New Testament, existed prior to the exodus from Egypt, the Scriptures do not determine—though it is supposed that such always formed a part of the ceremony of circumcision. We read of clean and unclean beasts and fowls; intimating a distinction between consecrated and impure animals. This, possibly, held true among human beings—distinguishing the holy from the unholy. The expression, 'the sons of God and the daughters of men,' manifestly refers to the pious and the profane; the sanctified and the polluted, who were not to be united in marriage, any more than Jews and gentiles of later times; give some countenance to our supposition. If this conjecture be valid,

probably, some rite was appointed and practised, by which the sanctified and the unholy would be marked and formally distinguished. And if there were any such ceremony, most likely, it was by a symbolical purification with water—the element so generally employed for that purpose in after times. Of this, however, we have no certainty; and, of course, it cannot be pleaded as a ground of positive argument in support of either Infant or Adult Baptism. While, on the other hand, the probabilities in its favour are such, that no person can think of positively denying that the rite had been instituted, and was generally observed, among the early descendants of Abraham, or of building an argument on the assumption of its non-existence.

Peter refers to the safety of Noah and his family in the ark, floating on the waters of the deluge, as being, in some respects, like water-baptism, by which we are typically saved, under the gospel dispensation. But the instance is too limited in its application, if not too obscure in its purport, to be regarded as illustrative of baptism in the present economy. And, while we readily admit, that there were no infants saved by water in the ark; it will be as readily conceded to us, that the adults then baptized were not dipped or immersed in the waters of the flood. As in the baptism in the Sea, so in the deluge, none but the enemies of God and of his people were thoroughly washed, and that not by dipping, but by overwhelming, them; and they unhappily were drowned. Those who regard the Apostle Peter as referring to water-baptism, can place it only in the category with those expressions which render a belief of the truths of the gospel necessary before the admission of adults into the congregations of Christianity, leaving the case of infants, *pro* or *con*, entirely out of the question. The supposition, that it alludes exclusively to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, renders it more congruous with the connexion, and accordant with the spirit of evangelical doctrines. That there is nothing in the language of Peter adverse to Infant Baptism, will be readily taken as granted by all ingenuous students of the sacred writings; for, in the instance referred to, there were no infants in Noah's family to be baptized; had there been, they certainly would have shared in the baptizing; and not been kept or turned out to perish in the deluge, lest they should have received a benefit to which they were not entitled. On the other hand, as Mr. Keach remarks, there 'was cursed Ham,' who was baptized with the rest of the family in the ark; which fact



militates against the notion of our opponents, 'That none but 'truly regenerate and holy people might undergo this sacred 'and consecrating rite.' By the way, as we have seen before, one of Mr. Keach's chief objections to regard the baptism in the Red Sea, as being analogous to Christian baptism, is founded on the circumstance, that unconverted persons were baptized unto Moses. He thus assumes the doctrine he and his friends are challenged to prove, that none but spiritual people are ever rightly baptized unto Jesus Christ. But what is to become of Ham!

The case of Jacob erecting a pillar in Bethel, and pouring oil upon it, thus consecrating it to God, or rendering it a sacred memorial of God's gracious manifestation to him in his distress, intimates, that, even in those very remote times, it was customary to set apart certain *things* to the Lord, by a kind of anointing; and if so, why not *persons*? The use of oil, instead of water, might arise from necessity; or, in Jacob's judgment the occasion might demand a more costly dedication than that effected by water; as in the case of consecrating priests, kings, and prophets to Jehovah. Gen. xxviii. 18. When God subsequently commanded Jacob to go to Bethel, and there make an altar, the Patriarch ordered his household 'to be clean and change their garments.' Was not this an instance of purification, such as was afterwards observed at Sinai, and called baptism by the apostle? Gen. xxxv. 2. Certainly, this transaction is both striking and instructive.

That purifications, consecrations, or baptisms, with water, were of very remote times, antedating the Mosaic institutions, has been very generally accredited, from the circumstance, that they were customary in ancient nations, having little or no existing connexion with the Jewish people. Like some other traditionary practices, discovered in very early ages, and in very distant regions of the earth; baptism, and the baptism of children also, must, it is assumed, have been derived from periods prior to the general dispersion of the human family, or before the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel. It does not seem that such a rite, with such a design, and with such a connection, as we find it, was likely to have originated spontaneously in the human mind, and especially in the minds of distant and very dissimilar classes of mankind. Like sacrifices, it probably had a common origin; and, like those, were spread with the dispersion of the human family. Still, in this matter we have no explicit information, nor any indubitable records, as to

the beginning of baptism before that to which Paul directs our notice in his address to the Corinthians. We shall, therefore, continue to regard the baptism in the Red Sea as the admitted commencement of purely religious baptisms.

The consecration of the Hebrews to Moses being, if not the first, at least, the largest administration of baptism ever effected in the world, and which was performed by God himself, with grand and fearful demonstrations of his presence, when the first systematically organized communion of professed worshippers of Jehovah was established; we may reasonably look to it for such light as it sheds on all subsequent administrations of this ordinance, especially in reference to those particulars which succeeding narratives have not so definitely explained; and which possibly were not minutely detailed in the New Testament, because the original institution was, on most points, so plain and so well understood by the later Jews and the primitive Christians. In this case, it is analogous to the institution of the sabbath. To keep sacred the seventh part of our time, we learn to be our duty and interest from the New Testament, in which we have certain vague intimations as to the manner in which it was sanctified. But, for particulars, full instructions, and specific reasons on this subject, we must recur to the fourth commandment, as given to, and promulgated by, Moses. From this alone we learn, that there is to be a total cessation of secular labour for man and beast—that the day is to be observed as holy or consecrated to the Lord, for his worship and honour—and for our own advantage—and because on the seventh day, God ceased from the work of creating the world. The fact and duty of water-baptism, we learn in the New Testament; but the proper subjects, and mode of it, we learn only or chiefly from the Old.

Now, it is placed beyond all doubt, that in this baptizing in the sea, hundreds of thousands of children and infants were devoted to Moses, or, rather, to Christ, of whom Moses was a figure. We subsequently read of numerous succeeding baptisms, among the same people, in the form of purifications, washings, cleansings, and sanctifyings, without any express exclusion of children or infants; and, therefore, we have no more authority to excommunicate them than any other class of persons participating in those ancient rites. When it is said that God fed all the people, blessed all the people, protected all the people, and the like; we are compelled to conclude that infants and children were fed, blessed, and

protected, in common with the adult Hebrews. If our deductions be deemed gratuitous and invalid, our opponents will have to show us in what respects we are illogical. Children are as physically capable of being baptized as of being defended, fed, and blessed, as men and women. The only point in dispute is, whether it was God's will and practice to baptize them. To establish this point is the question at issue between us.

The result at which we reasonably and necessarily arrive is, that infants were regularly baptized unto Christ, with their parents or guardians, in the apostolic age, as previously they had been in the Red Sea, and during the continuance of the Levitical economy. It is on the ground of these precedent and pattern baptisms, that we, in a great measure, rest our belief that women, as well as children, were purified by John the Baptist—for we never expressly read of his baptizing a female of any age or station. That the baptism of the Red Sea was viewed with deep interest, and as fraught with much instruction to the first converts of Christianity, by the Apostle Paul, we are certain, from his reference to it, in his solemn and powerful address to the Corinthians on the subject. That his inspired and enlightened contemporaries viewed it in a similar aspect, we may safely infer. And, further, we ourselves ought, with Mr. Stovel, to regard it as of equal interest and importance in the present day—and as being a 'prelude' or pattern of Infant Baptism under the gospel.

I would here remark, before proceeding to the next section, that all Jewish parents and adult persons, living in the apostolic times, being viewed as worthy members of the Hebrew church, and being willing to become members of the reformed communion established by Christ and his disciples, were, without any further change of mind or heart, readily received and incorporated with the Christian fellowship, and sustained the same religious status and relationships they enjoyed before. Why, then, should not their families be viewed with the same favour, and received with the like freedom? Why should virtuous parents have been accepted, and their innocent offspring have been rejected? And how would such a novel and unnatural distinction have been made for the first time when the gospel was first preached? A worthy Hebrew, as soon as he was willing to join himself to the Saviour's disciples, without a renewed regeneration, was received by the apostles, and immediately regarded as a worthy Christian. And, surely, the children that were worthy

of being in God's church, under the law, were equally worthy of being the like members of God's church, under the gospel. This inference we readily draw; we hold it fair; and our present work is to prove that our reasonings cannot be refuted.

SECTION SECOND.—*The distance of time and place, between the Baptisms unto Moses and unto Christ, in no degree lessens the validity of our inferences.*—Paul pleads the example of the former, as though the act had been accomplished but a few weeks before, and only a few miles off. Nor is the case of the baptism in the sea, in this respect, singular. The faith of Abraham, the manna from heaven, the water from the rock, and especially the exodus from Egypt, are pleaded in the New Testament as motives to belief, steadfastness, and obedience, with the same freedom and force as though they had been but of yesterday. Now, suppose, that instead of the Baptism in the Red Sea, fifteen hundred years before, and three hundred miles off, we had the narrative of a similar transaction in the Jordan just by, a few years previously. Or suppose we had read, that all the inhabitants of Judea, Jerusalem, and the region round about Jordan, without any possible exceptions of rank, sex, or age, had been unquestionably baptized by the harbinger of Christ; had been thereby introduced to the enjoyment of great religious privileges, and had been laid under high obligations to holiness—and suppose Paul had pleaded this recent baptism as a striking example, as in the case under review, or as the ground of a persuasive argument, to the baptized Corinthians; would not every reader have been compelled to believe, that the baptism at the Jordan and that at Corinth were the same, in all their leading particulars?

Further, suppose numerous children were necessarily and undoubtedly among the multitudes at John's baptizing at Bethabara, and were certainly baptized by him with their parents and friends; should we not be constrained to infer, that such were also the subjects of baptism in the city of Corinth? We imagine, a doubt on this point would never have arisen in the mind of any unsophisticated interpreter of the sacred writings, nor, indeed, of any one else. But the interval of centuries can make no difference in the force and adaptation of this Hebrew precedent; unless, in that interval, some circumstances had arisen, to set aside the full application of the precedent—to cut off, at least, one-third of the subjects of the ceremony—but which, in this case, most



certainly never occurred. The conclusion in favour of baptizing infants, from the example given in the Red Sea, is as authoritative, appropriate, and satisfactory, as though it had taken place nigh at hand, in respect both of time and locality.

In fact, were precedents and examples to lose their influence, through distance of space, or lapse of time, the piety of Enoch would never have been pleaded by Paul, before the believing Hebrews; nor would the zeal of Paul himself, be a precedent to British Christians in the present day, so far from the age and scene of his piety and labours. One thing is certain, that our brethren, in their public discourses, frequently refer to persons, deeds, and events, as remote as the days of Adam, and his antediluvian posterity; and they adduce their topics as confidently and energetically as though they were matters of far more proximate occurrence. When they speak of the meekness of Moses, the valour of Joshua, the patience of Job, and the devotion of David; they never anticipate, that their illustrations are without perfect adaptation and power, because those great and good men lived so long ago. Further, they often allude to the sacrifices, purifications, anointings, and consecrations, common before or under the Mosaic law, gathering lessons of piety, and illustrations of truth and providence, as freely as from the sayings and doings of the holy apostles themselves. Consequently, the Corinthians, reasoning by the like rule, would never have imagined that the baptism of infants, in the Red Sea, was no good or appropriate precedent for them, because it was administered so long before, and in a part of the world so far away.

SECTION THIRD.—*Infant Baptism is not more liable to abuse now, than was the baptism of infants in the Red Sea.*—That priestcraft, ignorance, and a false philosophy, have frequently, extensively, and shockingly, perverted and abused the doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism, is, unhappily, too manifest. And it is this abuse on which the opponents of the ordinance are continually enlarging. We are pointed to popery and state-churchism, in which Infant Baptism is always identified with regeneration and salvation; and in which sponsors are compelled to make vows they all necessarily break. We are then warned of the danger of even remotely sanctioning a practice so destructive to the souls of mankind; our opponents asserting that this ceremony is never performed now without running the risk of producing the like fearful delusions! But, as previously shown, Infant

Baptism is no more necessarily connected with the doctrine of spiritual regeneration, than was circumcision of old, or than the Lord's Supper is identified with salvation in these gospel times. It is a fact, those who teach, that infants are regenerated in baptism, teach the same respecting adult baptism; and it is equally certain, that, though Infant Baptism, erroneously administered, is a fearful evil, adult baptism, when perverted, is much worse—involving a greater inconsistency, and effecting much greater mischief. See *Fisher's 'Liturgical Purity.'* ch. vi. I submit to the candid reader whether some of the remarks quoted from Stovel, Noel, and others, on this head, are not of as dangerous a tendency, as any broached by ministers of the Anglican and Romish communions?

That this rite is now perverted by superstition and priestly assumption and cunning, tells no more against the simple and legitimate performance of it, as practised among evangelical nonconformists, than it might have done in the days of Moses, or than it does still against the practice of adult baptism—which, as we have seen, perverts it in a most fearful and extensive degree. The rising Hebrew youths, in the wilderness, might have argued, 'Surely we are all the Lord's people, we were begotten anew in baptism, we were consecrated to the God of Israel, we were born again; our protection, comfort, and salvation, are now secure; another new-birth is not necessary; we are all right; we may live at our ease, murmur to our hearts' content, and still feel sure of entering Canaan and heaven.' That the Jews, in later times, at least, were prone to presume on the favour of God, through their relationship to Abraham, their circumcision, their laws, their religious institutions, and their national distinctions, there can be no question. The effects of their presumption were visible in their glaring sins and hopes of impunity. But, surely, this abuse of divine statutes, ordinances, and blessings, was no proof that, of themselves, they were wrong, pernicious, or not from heaven!

In our own times, the Lord's supper, pulpit ministrations, the doctrines of grace, church-membership, the atonement of Christ, the mercy of God, divine worship, and the Scriptures of truth, are perverted and abused quite as greatly and as extensively as Infant Baptism. But, it does not necessarily follow, that the Lord's supper, preaching, divine worship, and the like, are all unscriptural, and should be given up, because of any pernicious perversion of them by ignorant,

superstitious, and ungodly people! Adult or, what is called, Believers' Baptism, is as liable to abuse as Infant Baptism; and, according to the comparative extent of its administration, is much more fearfully desecrated. Infant Baptism, as practised and preached by all evangelical dissenters, contains nothing in form or expression, which, fairly regarded and construed, can lead to spiritual pride or religious presumption. It is simply a dedication of the young to Christ, as others were originally dedicated to Moses—and even as vessels were consecrated to the service of the temple. It is ostensibly initiating them to the rights and privileges of Christian instruction and pastoral superintendence; just as the little Israelites were initiated to the advantages and obligations of the former dispensation—without the slightest intimation being subsequently given them, by their pastors or teachers, that they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost, spiritually sanctified, or saved from perdition, by this simple and beautiful sacrament.

That numbers, who favour and scripturally practice Infant Baptism, have occasionally used incautious expressions, especially when the baptismal controversy was in abeyance and asleep, as many sincere Christians have done respecting every gospel rite, doctrine, and duty, we are free to confess. On these, our opponents eagerly fasten; and on them they build many of their most plausible arguments against this service. But, by such unguarded statements, we are to be neither guided nor bound; any more than our consistent Baptist brethren, at large, are to be taunted with all that has been rashly and foolishly spoken or written by their predecessors, and even contemporaries, respecting adult immersion—making it, as some of them have done, if not absolutely a saving ordinance, yet, as being essential to Christianity here; a seal of conversion and sanctification to the baptized; and all but requisite to ultimate admission into heaven after death. Nor will they feel themselves implicated in the strange notions advocated respecting the doctrines of grace, the Divinity of Christ, the polity of the Christian church, the practical duties of believers, and numerous other points, broached and advocated by men who are zealous Antipedobaptists, and who, if they can, will always dip their converts. The abuse of a doctrine or ordinance contains no evidence against its divine veracity, or its Scriptural administration—if it did, what Christian creed or ceremony would be safe? Surely, adult immersion must be surrounded with equal dangers, notwith-

standing the feelings of superiority, which numbers of the less intelligent among its advocates manifest toward those who differ from them on this question—feelings which prompt even some of their preachers to express, from the pulpit, their pity at the ignorance, timidity, or, want of honesty, in many, if not most, of their Pedobaptist brethren!

SECTION FOURTH.—*If Paul repudiated Infant Baptism, his argument with the Corinthians was very incautiously constructed.*—As we shall presently perceive the interpretation of the terms he employed would induce all reasonable Corinthians to believe, that infants were baptized unto Moses. The consequence of this belief would certainly have been, an assumption, that their own children should be baptized also; unless they had discovered elsewhere in the apostle's writings or addresses, some special and very cogent reasons for excluding them from this sacrament. But, they could not find even a single hint, to warrant the notion, 'that the children were not to be in their religious relationships, just 'as aforetime.' Jer. xxx. 20. If many of the Congregation at Corinth were truly enlightened and converted Jews, which is highly probable, for Paul reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath day, persuading the Jews as well as the Greeks; (Acts xviii. 4,) the conviction in their minds would have been still deeper and stronger, and would have led them to infer, that, as circumcision was now or soon to be abolished, their children should unquestionably be baptized, as the infant Israelites had been in the Red Sea and subsequently. If this were not to be done, they would have been misled, and that quite gratuitously. For enforcing obedience to God, and stedfastness in his covenant, Paul was under no necessity of employing the precise language he used, nor of making the allusions he did. He might have avoided entirely all reference to baptism; and yet have equally promoted his object—stedfastness in obedience to Christ.

He might have reasoned thus: 'Our Fathers passed through 'the sea, under the guidance of Moses; they were miraculously 'delivered from the power of Pharaoh and his army; they 'were blessed with the best of laws, statutes, and ordinances; 'they had manna from heaven, and water from the rock; 'and were thereby laid under high obligations to obey the 'Lord in all things, and to love him with all their hearts and souls. 'But they rebelled against him, and fell in the wilderness; '&c.' This reasoning would have been just as forcible and



appropriate, without any reference to baptism, as it is with it. Had no constructive allusion been made in the text, to Infant Baptism, or had it been purposely excepted, no possible mistake could have arisen, respecting this ordinance, from his argument; for upon it they would have founded no expectation, that any of their children should have been baptized. But, there it is, eminently calculated to mislead them; that is, if Paul were certainly, what our opponents believe him to have been—decidedly opposed to Infant Baptism—or if it were not practised by him during his gospel ministry.

The like reasoning will apply to other statements and narratives of baptism in the New Testament. Take the accounts respecting the procedure of John the Baptist:—‘There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.’ Matt. iii. 5. ‘And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were *all baptized* of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.’ Mark i. 5. John preached beforehand ‘the baptism of repentance to *all the people* of Israel;’ Acts xiii. 24; and baptized them too. Here they read, or, doubtless, had heard, that all the population of the Hebrew metropolis, and of other cities, with those of the towns and countries adjacent, went to John at the Jordan, and were all baptized by him, about thirty years before. For aught the words intimate, there was no exception of children—which might have easily been made—any more than there was in the case of the baptism in the Red Sea. The Jewish reader, at least, would never have imagined, that infants were left at home alone, on account of their age, any more than the women, on account of their sex. And if they were present, it would certainly have been assumed, that they were all baptized, as their infant ancestors had been in the Red Sea, and also for uncleanness, both in the wilderness and in Canaan.

Indeed, the sacred historian declares, that ‘*all* the people were baptized.’ Luke iii. 21; and we know, that children are as really people as old men and women. Now, if infants were not baptized, and if the sacred historians were decidedly opposed to Infant Baptism, as being a sinful and dangerous practice; they were unpardonably incautious in their method of narrating the baptisms at the Jordan—having employed language needless to their history, and yet calculated greatly to mislead their readers. Antipedobaptists would have employed a very different mode of expression. Neither would the

Corinthians, nor any other converts to Christianity, have concluded that children were not to be baptized, because Matthew nor Mark particularly mentions infants as being among the multitudes congregated near the Jordan and Enon. As the language of the evangelists literally comprehends males only, they could not thence infer, that, therefore, children were not the subjects of this rite any more than that female adults were all excluded from it. The result of carefully reading the above Scripture passages would induce them to baptize women and children alike or neither of them. As before remarked, should some historian inform us that certain transactions which took place in a city or county greatly benefitted the inhabitants, the people, the population; who, on reading the statement, would infer, that none but adults partook of the advantages, and that the children, and especially the infants, did not share in them?

But, it is replied, that the case is qualified by the expression, The converts of John 'CONFESSED THEIR SINS.' This however, would not, in the least measure, have affected the conclusion of the Corinthians, respecting the baptism of the children. It is nowhere said that any of the Corinthians themselves confessed their sins. They simply believed what Paul preached, and then were baptized. With respect to the converts of the harbinger of Christ, who are said to have done so; they would have felt, that this was a general confession, and not a personal one. An individual confession, they well knew, would have been quite impracticable, in the short time of John's ministration, before the baptism of Christ—six months at the outside; and when his subjects must have been, as Mr. Hall expresses it, a 'prodigious multitude'—'almost 'national.' p. 26. They would, moreover, have known that individual confession was not required either in the Red Sea, nor on any other occasion of entering into covenant with God. This supposed personal confession of repentance and faith is as difficult in the judgment of our opponents as in our own. Mr. Stovel says, 'John did require faith, and the faith which 'he required was no superficial act of the intellect merely, 'but one which ruled the heart, and formed the character.' p. 119. 'But,' he also observes, 'it is not for us to explain 'in what way John received the confession of sin, and the 'declaration of his repentance from each candidate for his 'baptism; all we mean to affirm is, that the confession and 'repentance required, were of that kind which stands, in the 'dispensation of mercy, connected with the forgiveness of sin;

'and that the pledge of submission to the coming Lord, was 'one on which an action might be taken in Christian discipline.' p. 98. For aught Mr. Stovel can tell, it might be a nod of assent, lifting up the hand, or a loud Amen, by the multitude. He cannot account for personal confession; and yet, without the least evidence, or show of probability, he supposes it must have been made!

Might not this confession have been made by the father, for himself and family; as Job confessed for his sons and daughters? or as Nehemiah did for the nation? or as the High Priest did for the whole people? or as the minister of Christ now does for his congregation? When the assembled Israelites, in the wilderness and in the Holy Land, openly declared their contrition for sin against God, and their determination to observe the propounded laws, rules, and covenants, of heaven; the male adults, or, perhaps, the heads of their families, or of their tribes, only spake the words, while all present—the inferior men, with the women and children—were implicated in the confessions and resolutions equally with those who audibly uttered the expressions, and as much so, as if every one of them had lifted up his hand and voice in solemn assent or affirmation. A contrary notion would never have entered the mind of an intelligent Jew, or gentile either. The usual Amen, of the family or company, was all that would have been expected, or that was practicable. The assent of an assembly is given by lifting up the hand; and so is their veto. And, occasionally, silence gives the required consent. That resolution is said to be passed unanimously, in which all present tacitly acquiesce.

It is clear that what was done paternally, was done domestically; that what the head did was done by the members, and bound them all; and that what was spoken to God by the priest or the preacher, was spoken in his representative capacity. An identity was understood to exist between the root and the branches of the household tree. There might be many members, forming one body, and governed and regulated by one head. The king's word was for all the nation; and his pledge, on their behalf, bound them all. Israel is generally recognized as one person. 'I have brought my son out of Egypt.' What the father was in faith, relationship, obligation, and privilege, that the wife, family, and household were understood to be; and as such they were treated for good or for evil. The like holds true in a great measure now. We should never designate the children of a

Christian parent, in their religious aspect, little Mahometans, Jews, or heathens, but little Christians. The offspring of a Briton, in their national aspect, are British; of a Frenchman, French; and of a Spaniard, Spanish. On this point, the Jews, who were well acquainted with their own laws and usages, would never suppose, that, because infants could not confess their sins personally and verbally, as done by their parents, at their own baptism, the former could not therefore have been baptized with them, nor confession made on their behalf.

Besides it was a voluntary confession on the part of the people; it was not required by the Baptist; it was not made a condition of receiving the baptismal rite; and, for aught that appears, they might have been, and were baptized without it. John did not say, 'personal and individual' confession of sin must precede the administration of this 'service; and he that is not willing or able to make it, is not 'qualified to receive the rite.' After John had performed the service on the multitude, he exhorted them to be virtuous, honest, and sober. But, previous to the rite, he required nothing of them but compliance with the ordinance. As afterwards enjoined in the apostolic commission, he baptized, and then taught the people. He first made them disciples, and then he instructed them. How much so, we have previously seen. John, doubtless, observed the ancient rule, to purify persons and things, and then consecrate them to God, and not to offer him the unclean and unsanctified.

Again, the Corinthians would not infer that the phrase, 'Confessing their sins,' necessarily implied a change of heart in the people that made it. The confession might have been general and national; lamenting their transgressions as a people, suffering under the Roman yoke, and hoping for temporal deliverance, through the approaching King of Zion. Or, if the confession were for personal transgressions, which, by the way, is not asserted, they well knew that Balaam confessed his own sins, without being converted; Simon Magus virtually did the same, while in the bonds of iniquity; and we know that millions besides have done the like in public worship, in the prospect of death, and, when alarmed, at the approaching day of Judgment; but whose conversion to God has been most questionable. The expression, therefore, in no degree opposes the conclusion, that infants were baptized with their parents at the Jordan. That John did not regard all the multitudes he baptized as spiritually converted, may be further inferred from his impressive declarations, that Christ



thereafter would fan the chaff from the floor ; and that many of them would, without future repentance and piety, be driven away by the wind, or burnt up with unquenchable fire. Nor would the Corinthians be ignorant of the fact, that the multitudes baptized by John, had subsequently, (with comparatively few exceptions,) manifested no evidence of having been spiritually regenerated. They had, doubtless, heard of those confessors persecuting Christ and his faithful apostles, and uniting in savage clamours to put them to death. Of their religion, therefore, they could have formed no very high opinion, notwithstanding they had confessed their sins and been baptized in the river of Jordan ! If I am not greatly out in my judgment, our opponents lay very little stress on the verbal confessions made by their own candidates for baptism. They look rather to their past moral and religious conduct, than to all their declarations of belief, and professions of future piety.

It has been contended, that the PROPHECIES concerning the ministry of John, indicate the effectual and spiritual success of his labours ; and that, therefore, through his preaching, multitudes were first converted to God, and then baptized unto Christ. We are referred to Isaiah xl. 3 ; Mal. iv. 5, 6 ; Luke i. 16, 17, 76, 77. Mr. Noel cites Matt. iii. 2 ; and John i. 6-8, 23-36, to show that such results accorded with the prediction. He proceeds, ' I know of no other proof that ' the ministry of John corresponded to the predictions ' concerning him ; and the value of this proof depends upon ' the conditions of his baptism. If he baptized all applicants ' indiscriminately, then there is no proof whatever, that he ' "made ready a people prepared for the Lord," because ' superstitious or sordid motives may have induced numbers ' to apply for baptism. But he baptized those only who ' solemnly professed to repent and believe in Christ shortly to ' come ;' [Qy ?] ' then the multitudes who were baptized by ' him show that he signally fulfilled the prophecies concerning ' him. It is, therefore, probable—since he certainly fulfilled ' those prophecies, and the sacred narratives record no other ' proof of the fulfilment—that those numerous baptisms furnish ' this proof, and that those who were baptized by John, made ' a solemn profession of their repentance and faith.' p. 50, 51.

There is little doubt, that what was foretold concerning John, he attempted, and, perhaps, accomplished ; and what that was, we must gather from the record of his success. He was to make ' ready a people prepared for the Lord.' But did this preparation consist in the conversion of the Jews, by

the grace of God attending his crying in the wilderness? The answer is, 'Christ came to his own and his own received him not.' Multitudes of them followed and lauded him; but he tells them it was for the sake of the loaves and fishes, for temporal benefits, and because of the miracles of healing. That the people were so far prepared by John, as to follow Christ, the expected Messiah, to listen to his beautiful discourses, and some to enrol themselves as his disciples, we readily perceive. But, alas! how many went back, how many of them cried, 'Crucify him,' how few were steadfast, and how little was that flock to whom God gave the kingdom! As Mr. Hall observes, 'They all but uniformly forsook Christ,' and all but unanimously voted for his crucifixion. Mr. Noel confounds a preparation for Christ, with a preparation for heaven, a meetness to come, as troubled souls to Christ, for light and comfort, with a supposed repentance, remission of sin, and faith in the Saviour's sufferings and effectual mediation in glory.

If John required a 'solemn profession of spiritual repentance,' and the people made it, they were sheer hypocrites; and if they professed belief in Christ, their faith was dead, being alone. John preached repentance; but it does not prove that the multitudes did repent, after a godly sort, any more than it is a proof, that an audience must be holy, because a minister preaches to it the necessity of holiness. John baptized them unto repentance; but that is no evidence his hearers were truly sorry for their sins beforehand; but, simply, that he urged it upon them thereafter. Multitudes have been baptized by our opponents unto Christ, who never cordially embraced him, nor exercised saving faith in his doctrines or death. In connexion with this subject, our opponents appear never to read of repentance, but they think of a broken and a contrite heart; never of a profession, but it springs from a sincere mind; never of a disciple, but a renewed follower of the Lamb; never of a believer, but a genuine Christian. At any rate, such is the only impression one can gather from their writings and preachings, when directed against Infant Baptism.

Further, respecting APOSTOLIC PRACTICE in this case. When the Corinthians read, in the Epistle to their church, ch. i. 16, that Paul had 'baptized the household'—*oikon*, family—'of Stephanus;' or in Acts. xvi. 15, that 'Lydia 'believed,' and that then 'she and her household'—*oikos*, family—'were baptized;' or in verse 33, that the Jailer 'was

‘baptized, he and his [household] ‘straightway;’ or in ch. x. 47, that ‘Cornelius, and those that were with him’—verse 2, *oiko*, family—‘were baptized;’ would they not, to say the least, be in danger of supposing that there might be children in some of these domestic circles? Would they not have reasoned, ‘If all the households were adults only—full-grown men and women—would it not have been better to have said so, even ‘if they were not individually named? Why employ language ‘so calculated to mislead us—if children were never to be ‘baptized, and, particularly so, if it would be deluding and ‘endangering their souls to baptize them?’

Besides, they might have read or heard of other Christian families who, as a matter of course, were baptized like the families before-mentioned, and in which, they might naturally conclude, there were some little ones. There is the church that is in the house—*oikon*, family—of Priscilla and Aquila; the church that is in the house—*oikon*, family—of Nymphas; the church in the house—*oikon*, family—of Philemon; Crispus believed in the Lord with all his house—*oiko*, family. The Lord have mercy on the house—*oiko*, family—of Onesiphorus. Salute them—the family—which are of Aristobulus’ household. Unto the elect lady and her—*teknois*—children. The—*tekna*—children of thy elect sister, greet thee. I again ask, would not the Corinthian converts and their successors, in their simplicity or sagacity, have been in danger of supposing, that, in a dozen families, there might have been some children? And, as they might fairly presume, that these were only a few of the hundreds of families baptized by the apostles, and regarded as Christian family circles; as the Corinthians could discover no expressions calculated to counteract the inferences they would reasonably draw from the use of such language; would they not conceive, that the children were rightly denominated Christians, and had been disciplined to Christ by baptism? And, if so, would they not have felt perplexed if told, that Infant Baptism was not a Christian ordinance, and that the inspired writers of these passages utterly condemned the rite?

Again, would they not have inquired, ‘Why were not the ‘sacred historians more explicit on a point so important and ‘interesting to us as parents? Why speak of families, if ‘they wished to guard us against error on this head? Why ‘did they not say, that none but adults, and those regenerated ‘by the Spirit of God were, or were to be, baptized? Their ‘arguments would have had all the effect they intended, had

‘they stated the simple truth in unequivocal language.’ Mr. Ewing justly observes, ‘To speak of *family* baptism, if ‘all were adults and believers, and each baptized on his own ‘profession of faith, appears incongruous, and is very apt to ‘mislead—why not say, so many Christians in one dwelling—‘why say family—if some were not young and unconverted? ‘The term *family* is calculated to lead to a practice different ‘from that adopted by the Baptists.’ p. 191. When Jehovah said, ‘I will be the God of all the families of Israel,’ Jer. xxxi. 1; would not the entire domestic circle be understood—without excepting the youngest children in it? If otherwise intended, would not the Almighty have said, ‘I will be the ‘God of all the heads of the families of Israel, or of all the ‘grown-up members in them; and not of the little ones, till ‘they have attained to man or womanhood?’ To speak of families now, is to include, indefinitely, all the inmates of the house, be they old or young, many or few; and, doubtless, it ever was the same.

Besides the forenamed ten or a dozen families, designated believers, disciples, or converts, in the Acts and Epistles, are noticed incidentally, not with the least apparent design of enumerating all the households that pertained to the Christian faith. There are about thirty persons identified and distinguished by name as being converts to the gospel; and these are not given as a list of all the noted individuals brought to Christ. We are told, that among the Jews, about twenty-five years after Christ, there were ‘many thousands’ [myriads] ‘of ‘Jews which believed, all zealous of the law;’ ‘and that ‘multitudes of men and women’ believed soon after the death of Ananias and Sapphira his wife; to say nothing of numerous gentile proselytes. Suppose these Hebrew Christians amounted to one hundred thousand. Then, it will be no immoderate estimate, if we conclude, that there were ten thousand families among them. And if we reckon one little child in every five families, we shall not be charged with exaggerating the matter. Now, in these ten thousand families, there would be two thousand children or infants. In this way the Corinthians would probably have reckoned, and have arrived at the conclusion, that all these two thousand little ones had been baptized with their parents; and then they would have naturally inquired, why their own should not be baptized also. Indeed, I can hardly imagine, that any opponent would now assume, there were fewer babes than we have supposed, among any hundred thousand adults—except



it were to make up an argument against Infant Baptism. We have not the names or numbers of all the families consecrated to God by any of the apostles. Mr. Hall assumes, that 'innumerable persons were baptized by St. Paul.' p. 130. Yet, those mentioned by name are comparatively very few.

Still, certain brethren will have it, that there were no infants in any of the dozen families just referred to. 'Did not the apostle preach the word to all that were in the house? Did not all the family attend to the word spoken to them? And how could babies be preached to, and give heed to the doctrine? Not at all. Hence, there were no little ones present; and all the evidence, in favour of Infant Baptism, founded on these baptized households, is invalidated in a moment!' In reply, let me ask our antagonists, whether there were not children in the congregations to which our Lord preached before feeding the multitudes with the loaves and fishes? The inspired historian answers, 'Yes.' When Moses, Joshua, Ezra, and others, addressed the great assemblies of the Hebrews, as previously referred to, were not the wives and the little ones present, forming a part of these vast gatherings? The sacred writers again answer, 'Yes.' Because a minister is said to speak to all his congregation, does it necessarily follow, that there can be no children or babes present? When an assembly is said to attend to the preacher, and to believe and approve of his discourse; must it be assumed, that there could be no little ones in it? Or, cannot we designate a family, as intellectual, benevolent, or religious, in which there may be infants? And is this not often done, without implicating the speaker in a charge of inconsistency or falsehood? In fact, the objection is founded on a fallacy, which an unprejudiced person instantly recognizes, and condemns as a quibble! People must be most resolute and reckless in their hostility to Infant Baptism, before they could so outrage the meaning of the current modes of human speech, in order to find, in such expressions, an objection against it. To me, one thing is certain, that the Corinthians would never have concluded, that the infants in a house were not baptized, because it was said, all the family heard or believed the preacher.

Dr. Wardlaw remarks, 'Let us only consider, for a moment, into what ridiculous absurdities we should be led by the general adoption of such a principle of criticism. The children of Israel were commanded, in preparing the passover, to take a lamb for *a house*, according to the *number of the*

'souls. Are we to infer from this, that they numbered the 'mouths of sucking infants? Or, that there were no such 'infants at the time in the families of Israel? They were 'enjoined to eat it, "with their loins girt, and their shoes on 'their feet, and their staff in their hand." Children could 'not do this; therefore, we conclude again, that there were 'none; and the conclusion is irresistibly confirmed by the 'testimony of the Psalmist respecting the passage through the 'Red Sea, for they went "through the flood," he says, "on 'foot," which infants certainly were incapable of doing. 'When the paralytic Eneas was cured by Peter, it is said, "'all that dwelt in Lydda, and Saron saw him, and turned to 'the Lord;" from which, among other instances, it will follow 'that these places presented the singular anomaly of a population 'without infants! Paul writes to the Thessalonians, that if 'any would not work; neither should they eat; were the 'babes in Thessalonica, then, to be left to starve, because they 'were incapable of earning, or of being willing to earn, their 'daily bread? Let no Baptist say indignantly, "this is 'ridiculous—it is making a joke of the matter." Let him 'recollect that the materials of the joke are furnished by his 'own friends. Let the *argument* (if it must have a name to 'which it has no title) be withdrawn, and there will be no 'room left for the *joke*. I am only ashamed indeed of being 'obliged to treat it so seriously. It is not worth the 'ammunition.' p. 88.

Another writer observes, 'But a brother may object, "all 'the house" cannot signify merely some of them, sufficiently 'grown. Yet, I remember a passage where we read, "all 'the house of Elkanah went up with him to offer unto the 'Lord;" but, in the next verse it is added, "Hannah went 'not up," neither young Samuel, a member of Elkanah's 'house, not yet weaned from the breast. 1 Sam. i. 21. And 'in the 4th of John, verse 46, we read of a nobleman of 'Capernaum, whose son was sick. He besought Jesus to 'come and heal him, saying, Sir, come down, ere my child '(*paidion*, a little infant,) die. Jesus healed the child, and 'we are told, the nobleman believed with his *whole house*. 'This *cannot* be affirmed of the infant healed—nor of any other 'young children the nobleman might have.' *Recantation*, p. 33.

Dr. Carson, probably feeling the difficulty of excluding children from the houses of all those said to believe, adopts another course of argument to surmount it. 'We know that 'the house of Crispus was baptized because the commission

‘enjoins it.’ p. 182. But, then, he makes all the children to be adults and individual believers. ‘When it is said, with respect to the Jailor, that Paul spake the word of the Lord to all that were in his house, I admit there might have been infants. And when it is said, a family were baptized, infants might have been in the house, without being included in the baptism. The commission as effectually excludes them from baptism, as their infancy excludes them from the number of those to whom the gospel was preached.’ *Ib.* p. 185. ‘Children are excepted by that commission that must guide all practice.’ *Ib.* p. 190. ‘When it is said, that Cornelius “feared God, with all his house,” is it necessary to assert, that there could have been no infants under his roof? Surely not. Why, then, is it supposed, that the baptism of households should imply the baptism of infants, who, by the commission, are excluded?’ *Ib.* p. 183.

But, it by no means necessarily follows, that infants were not baptized—of which rite they were confessedly capable—because they could not understand the preaching which accompanied that ceremony. Because speaking and eating frequently go together; must children go without their dinner because they cannot understand the discussions! The dispute here lies between the divine historian and Dr. Carson. The former states the fact, that the family was baptized—not excepting any of its members. The latter admits, there might be children present, and constitute parts of those families; but denies they were baptized—pleading that the terms of the commission excluded them. Whereas, it says not a word that would hinder the baptism of a single infant among them—but the very reverse; as I believe our remarks, on this head elsewhere, will convince the candid reader. The Doctor, however, concedes a point, for which Pedobaptists have long contended, that the term family possibly, or, probably, includes children. Now, it is unlikely their children were present when they were baptized, without being baptized also. The Doctor contends otherwise without the least valid reason. He might have as reasonably contended that children were not baptized in the Red Sea, when in company with their parents, who underwent that ceremony. Most Baptists argue, that there could be no children in the house, because they could not be preached to. Dr. Carson says, they might have been in the house; and might have been preached to also; but they could not have been baptized, because the terms of the commission would

have prevented it. So here, again, our Dipping Doctors differ—like their Pedobaptist friends!

‘We grant,’ says Mr. Wills, ‘the epistles were directed’ [some of them] ‘to professing believers joined in fellowship, *‘directly and immediately,* and to their children,’ [if they had any,] ‘and the children of all believers in succeeding ages, remotely; and the contents of the epistles concern both the parents at present, and the children when come to the years of discretion. A father that hath several children, some grown up to understanding, others minors or babes, may direct a book or epistle to them all. Whatsoever was writ was written as much for our instruction as the primitive Christians. We know Moses and the prophets directed what they writ to the church under that administration, whereof their children were a part; and yet, they were ignorant babes, and could not understand any thing or perform any duties. But, let it be considered, that, though they understood nothing of those divine exhortations, yet, being within God’s nursery and school, they were in a nearer capacity to be taught their duty, than aliens; and their parents were enjoined to teach them the ordinances of God; and God gave his testimony concerning Abraham, that he knew he would teach his children; and in the New Testament, it was the commendation of Lois, that she had instructed Timothy *apo brephous—ab infantia*—when he was an infant or little child.’ p. 77. Mr. Tombes also admits, ‘It is true, in the face of the visible church, the infants of believers are to be accounted God’s, to belong to his family and church, and not to the devil’s, as being in a near possibility of being members of the church of God, by an act of opinion grounded on probable hopes of the future.’ *Exam.* p. 41. In fine, the language of the New Testament, from the beginning to the end, was calculated to mislead ingenuous Israelites, and the proselyted heathen, provided Infant Baptism were contrary to the will of God, and adverse to the practice of the primitive believers; and, consequently, the inspired writers must have been very incautious in their statements, records, and reasonings! This, however, we dare not for a moment credit.

SECTION FIFTH.—*The silence of the Corinthians confirms the fact, that their children had been baptized equally with themselves.*—As intelligent people, they would readily discover the correct and full application of an argument, and



also any fallacy that might lurk in its construction. Had they been like unlettered and uncultivated Hottentots or Caffres, they might not have understood the principles of reasoning, or been competent to discover any discrepancies in a logical deduction. But not so the Corinthians. They evidently possessed a high order of intelligence. 'Though Corinth was thus dissipated and licentious in its character, yet it was also distinguished for its refinement and learning. Every part of literature was cultivated there, so that, before its destruction by the Romans, Cicero scrupled not to call it *'totius Græcæ lumen*—the light of Greece.' *Barnes*. So, in the time of Paul, he could say, 'I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.' As acute and inquiring people, they would search into the sense and import of the apostle's statements and appeals—more particularly, as he avowedly wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and was the acknowledged mouth of Jehovah to them. 'Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' 1 Cor. ii. 13. Every sentence and every syllable of his letters would be examined and criticised with the utmost attention; and their conclusions would be drawn with the nicest precision. Hence, had their own children not been baptized, as well as themselves, or like the infants in the Red Sea, or the young proselytes to Judaism, they would have been perplexed, and at a loss to discover the reasons for the omission, particularly as the gospel disclosed no other rite, at least, to the gentile converts, as a substitute for it. We can readily imagine them inquiring among themselves, as I think we, if wise men, should have done in similar circumstances—

'If all our national ancestry or, rather, all our ecclesiastical predecessors, known by the name of Israel—and constituting a fellowship, of which the Christian system is but a continuance—were baptized unto Moses; and if, at the time, more than a third of their number must then have been in a state of childhood or infancy; and if all these were baptized with their parents; how is it that *our* little ones were not baptized with ourselves, or since? The apostles speak of the great amplitude and liberality of the Gospel dispensation, compared with that of the law; and yet, they shut out, from our covenant and religious standing, ceremonials and advantages, those whom, in analogous circumstances, the covenant of Moses embraced. Therefore, how defective, and partially

‘applicable to us, is the writer’s argument, drawn from a  
 ‘consecration to God, so much more extensive and compre-  
 ‘hensive than that observed towards our Christian societies—  
 ‘in which children are neither circumcised nor baptized unto  
 ‘Jesus Christ? In the case on which the apostle’s appeal  
 ‘is based, both the parents, and their seed, were, through  
 ‘baptism, brought under individual obligations to love, obey,  
 ‘and confide in God; now, the parents only are, personally,  
 ‘so engaged and bound; nor will the young ones be under  
 ‘any similar obligations, till they are baptized, though it be  
 ‘not till twenty or forty years hence, or, possibly, not at all.’

‘In the Red Sea, a formal covenant relation was created  
 ‘between God, and men, women, and children; now between God  
 ‘and men only. Then the manifest blessing of heaven was  
 ‘on both the root and the branches, now on the root only. Then  
 ‘the benediction was pronounced on men and their seed;  
 ‘now on the men only. Hence, if the apostle’s argument be  
 ‘direct and valid, it can apply only to baptized adults, and  
 ‘not on their offspring also. These have never been dedicated,  
 ‘devoted, disciplined, or consecrated to God, by baptism, as  
 ‘were the little Hebrews in the Red Sea; and probably they  
 ‘never will be; or, at any rate, not at all as children. They  
 ‘are totally overlooked, as if they were beings without souls,  
 ‘and who come not within the scope of Christian attention.  
 ‘The apostles have told us, that now circumcision—the  
 ‘introduction to the Abrahamic covenant—is inadmissible, at  
 ‘least, among gentile converts to Christianity; so that children,  
 ‘though inducted to the patriarchal dispensation by circum-  
 ‘cision, and into the Mosaic by baptism, are not inducted to  
 ‘the gospel economy by either or, rather, are not inducted at  
 ‘all. This is very perplexing to us, and requires considerable  
 ‘explanation and evidence to prove that our beloved children  
 ‘should not be treated with as much ceremony and ministerial  
 ‘regard as the infant Israelites, and to free the argument  
 ‘of Paul from a considerable fallacy.’

It is reasonable to suppose, these Corinthian converts to  
 Christianity would have proceeded even still further in their  
 reflections on this question, if not in their criticisms of the  
 apostle’s language: ‘We have also learned from authorities  
 ‘we dare not dispute, that whenever a gentile parent became  
 ‘a proselyte to the religion of the Hebrews, his family always  
 ‘accompanied him in this transition from idolatry to the true  
 ‘church of Jehovah. This proselyting, we understand, has  
 ‘been of very frequent occurrence; and with it, we ourselves

‘have become fully acquainted, from the influence of the  
‘synagogue services among our countrymen. We are also  
‘assured, that before proselytes could be received into Jewish  
‘congregations, they, among other ceremonials, must be bap-  
‘tized, as a sign of spiritual purification. But, it was the  
‘invariable custom for their children to be baptized also, and  
‘to become members of the same body as their parents. No  
‘instance, we believe, is known, in which the father and  
‘mother were proselyted and purified, in which their little  
‘ones were denied the like rites and privileges. How happens  
‘it, then, that when we were proselyted to the gospel of Christ,  
‘and initiated into the fellowship of the friends of Christianity,  
‘by baptism, our children were not also baptized with our-  
‘selves? This is very strange! What can have been the  
‘cause of it? The children of gentile proselytes were baptized  
‘into Judaism: but they are not baptized into the gospel  
‘dispensation! Their little ones were made members of the  
‘Hebrew communion, and yet ours are denied membership in  
‘the religion of Christ, though, in every essential and leading  
‘principle, they are precisely one and the same religion!  
‘We solicit information on a matter so interesting, so strange,  
‘and, in our opinion, so unlovely and unscriptural! Pray,  
‘beloved Paul, enlighten our minds, and lessen the load on  
‘our hearts, in relation to this matter!’

Such, in all probability, would have been the inquiries and reflections of these Corinthian parents, warmly interested in the religious position of their children—if, after perusing the argument of the apostle, their own children had not been baptized like the infants baptized in the Red Sea; and, especially, had they been told, that it would have been very sinful and dangerous to have done so. And if many of the members of the congregation at Corinth were Jews, which, we repeat, is very probable, the non-participation of their little ones in this rite—after the reference of Paul to the baptism in the sea, and having a vivid recollection of the intimate relation of infants and their parents in all the rites and privileges of the Levitical economy, or when proselyted from heathenism to the worship of the true God—would have produced no small stir among them, and have prompted them to earnest interrogation, if not to open contention.

Even the converts from idolatry would feel that their little ones were left in a relative position inferior to what they had sustained before abandoning their false religion; since then, their children were united with themselves; nor ever viewed

with the indifference, and treated with the neglect, induced by the gospel. They would not, and could not, forget, that their offspring were formally dedicated to the gods which they had previously worshipped. But, it is remarkable, that not even a whisper of doubt, inquiry, or objection, is ever heard from the Corinthians, nor, in fact, from any other churches, instituted, or written to, by the apostles. In this respect, everything was done to the entire satisfaction of Christian proselytes, both from the Jews and the gentiles. The only conclusion at which we can legitimately arrive is, that parents and children were baptized together, whenever it was practicable, or with as little space between as matters made convenient. This fully, and this only, will account for their entire and universal silence on this, to them, most interesting and momentous subject.—An observation or two, on this topic, may be desirable.

OBSERVATION I.—*If the offspring of Christian parents had not been baptized, it would have been felt that the gospel had degraded them.*—Mr. Norcutt says, ‘Infants were members of the national church of the Jews;’ and, therefore, as such, they would be estimated by their parents and all around them. Mr. Davye, ‘Grants that infants were church members under the pedagogy of Moses, and that they were brought to the ordinance of the passover as soon as they were capable to eat it, and that under the gospel’ [all] ‘infants dying are in the covenant of grace.’ *Ex. Wall’s Hist.* vol. iii. p. 370. Dr. Cox says, ‘Infants under the law were members of the Jewish visible church.’ p. 154. They were, consequently, viewed and treated as sustaining a religious, and a highly honourable, relationship, to their priests, their parents, and to God. It would be estimated as the noblest position any infant Jew could occupy in the present world. The heathen proselyte and his family would esteem it an honour to belong to this holy nation, this peculiar people, this royal priesthood of the Lord, a people blessed above all people on the face of the earth. Into that visible church or communion, infants were always and formally inducted by circumcision and water-baptism.

Up to the time of John, and during the transition period of the apostolic age, when multitudes of Jews became Christians, their children had been actual and recognized members of the ancient Jewish church, equally, and in conjunction, with their Jewish parents. On the latter leaving their former communion, and joining that of the gospel, one of the following



results must have taken place. (1) Their children must have *gone with them*, and become duly initiated members of the reformed religion; or, (2) they must have remained in their *former ecclesiastical connexion*, while their parents united themselves with the followers of Christ; or, (3) they must have totally *lost their church-membership* and lived in connexion with no religious body whatever. Suppose the first course to have been pursued, then, all appears natural and righteous; and such as every godly parent must have cordially approved and desired. Suppose the second, and, then, the parents would have been in one religious fellowship, and their little ones in another, whose adult members were, for the most part, exceedingly hostile to the Christian community. Or, suppose the third, then, the gospel unchurched all the infants and children of the Jewish converts *the very same day* that their parents believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and were baptized unto him. So that, for example, when the three thousand were baptized, on the day of Pentecost, according to the views of our opponents, probably twice the number of children must have been professedly unchurched altogether—or intentionally left in the old Hebrew communion, while the parents formally entered the new! Such must have inevitably been one of the results, on the conversion of Jewish parents to Christianity, unless they were all childless, or all their offspring were grown up to the age of men and women! The like alternatives would also have occurred in respect of gentile parents becoming Christians—their children must have gone over to Christianity with them, or remained behind, still being actual members of some heathenish fellowship, or must have lost all federal connexion with any religious body of mankind! Let the reader make his election.

The early converts to Christianity well knew, that circumcision, though in some cases tolerated, was virtually abolished; and that, if their children were not disciplined to Christ by baptism, they would not be introduced at all to this community, and would not be considered members of the gospel congregation or fellowship. Now ‘circumcision is nothing, and ‘uncircumcision is nothing. Is any man called, being ‘circumcised, let him not be uncircumcised. Is any man ‘called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised.’ 1 Cor. vii. 18, 19. ‘If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you ‘nothing.’ Gal. v. 2. They would see, at a glance, that if their children or, at least, the males among them, were not to be introduced into the gospel dispensation by baptism,

they were to have no introduction at all; but were to be officially and ministerially excluded from the honours and blessings granted to their progenitors in the Hebrew economy; as if some fearful ban of heaven now, for the first time, rested on the rising race! Hence, all the young must have been tacitly excommunicated and degraded, or have remained in their old associations, while their parents were transferred to another—provided Infant Baptism were not practised in apostolic times, or unless children became members or disciples of Christianity, without any baptism or introduction at all.

Had such been really the fact, would it not have excited surprise, regret, and earnest inquiry? Would not believing parents have sorely felt, that now their little ones were totally overlooked, and treated as nonentities, in a way they had never been before, when their relation to God's covenant was similar to their own, and their introduction to it precisely of the like kind, when eight days old? And would they not have pressed the apostles, or their coadjutors, to circumcise or baptize their children? and, if refusing, at least, to state good reasons for their non-compliance? On this question, there can hardly be a second opinion. It has been well remarked, 'That a pious Jew, whose children had ever been associated with him in the church of God, before the establishment of Christianity, would have felt very little desire to be united with the apostles in a society from which their children were to be systematically excluded, and thereby compelled to descend to a lower relative condition in society than they sustained before.'

Indeed, as just now remarked, the Greeks and Romans were also accustomed to have their children associated with themselves in their religious rites, by a formal initiation into them on the eighth or ninth day after birth, called their Lustral Day, or the day of their purification—a practice, doubtless, dating from a very remote antiquity. Had the religion of Christ been exhibited even to them in the stern aspect assumed by the opponents to Infant Baptism; it is all but certain they would have been nearly, if not fully, as reluctant as the Jews to identify themselves with it on this ground, if on no other—the acceptance of themselves as members, and the rejection of all their dear children. Assuredly, they would have felt the necessity of soliciting the reasons, why their children should not be manifestly their fellow-heirs of the gracious favours of God? And if they were to be so, then, why should not their dedication to the Saviour be celebrated with all accustomed

and due solemnity? But we read of no objections or inquiries of any kind. We are compelled, therefore, to conclude, that the children of the first Christians were not placed in a relative position, inferior to what they sustained under their former religious systems.

To strengthen our arguments still further on this head, we remark, that the converts to Christianity, for twelve years after the ascension of Christ, were nearly all Hebrews, and constituted all the first congregations of Christian believers. They were not composed of people who had enjoyed no organized scheme of ecclesiastical polity, such as may be found in some savage parts of the world. Their former religious economy was of God, was minutely defined, and stamped with the seal of heaven. The Almighty had spoken to their fathers in Sinai, and commanded them concerning all he designed them to believe and to do. As members of this venerable, heavenly, and endeared religion, stood their children, side by side with themselves. Had these been expelled from their former elevated state, surely these jealous, zealous, and excitable people would have created a stir of no ordinary intenseness about it. Yet these Jews were all at peace on this question. They felt that no wrong had been done to them, or to their offspring.

The fact, that many, if not most, of these persons, circumcised their children, does not account for their silence. For this was known to be introductory to the covenant of Abraham, to be the seal of a Hebrew, and not initiatory to the gospel church, nor, indeed, to the church established at Sinai. However the Jew might retain circumcision, by which his children were recognized as the descendants of the father of the faithful, or dedicated to the God of Israel; he would feel that the introduction to the seminary or church of Christ was baptism with water, into the name of Jesus or, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that, by this ceremonial alone, he, himself, had been introduced to its privileges, honours, and obligations; and that, without this rite, though his children might be regarded as Jews, they would never be deemed Christians. It was this baptismal ceremony they would covet and demand. And this would be especially the case with those more enlightened Israelites, who entirely gave up circumcision—as, doubtless, some of the better instructed of them did, at an early period, and all their successors in the course of time.

A remark of Dr. Owen is worthy of solemn consideration :

'If God denies the sign to the infant seed of believers, it must be, because he denies them the grace of it; and then, 'all the children of believing parents,' [and of every other,] 'dying in their infancy, must be, without hope, eternally 'damned. I do not say, that all must be so, who are not 'baptized; but all must be so, whom God would have not 'baptized.' *Works*, vol. xxi. p. 549. If God deny baptism to infants, under the gospel dispensation, it must arise from their incapacity to receive the thing signified by it—a new heart and eternal life. Nor can we imagine, why persons should so strenuously oppose the baptism of infants, unless they deemed them incapable of receiving the grace of salvation, or that it might prevent their doing so. Assuming that infants could not be at all benefitted by making them legatees to a will, or by making them tenants for life in an estate, or by conferring upon them titles to future honours and favours; we could readily account for persons neglecting or opposing these acts as useless—but on no other principle—certainly not, because of any positive evils arising from them; for none could legitimately ensue. But, our opponents believe, that children are capable of being regenerated and glorified, and that baptism will never keep them out of heaven. Whence, then, their hostility? Evidently, a misconception of God's revealed will in the matter, and a conscientious abhorrence of the abuse to which this ordinance, in common with every other, has been subject. But, this abuse is not inherent in the service. Mr. Pengelly says, 'Persons dying incapable of 'faith in Christ, are, without doubt, saved, not by water, nor 'by the work of man; but, by the blood of Christ, and by 'the power of the Spirit.' p. 71. By the power of the Spirit, must be meant, what is called the baptism of the Spirit, of which water-baptism is the type. Why, then, should this latter be injurious? And why such opposition to Infant Baptism?

OBSERVATION II.—*They would be at a loss to harmonize the Saviour's avowed love to the young with their exclusion from the only rite that could officially distinguish and benefit them.*—Under the former dispensations, the kindness of God was displayed towards them in various forms; intimating that they were the objects of divine love and care. This affection was manifested by his having circumcised or baptized them, or both; and thereby inducting them into the highest relative privileges and honours of which they were capable. This the Christian converts well knew. At the same time, they knew that the Saviour, when



on earth, had also exhibited great love toward children, had set them up as patterns of docility, and humbleness of mind, even to his twelve chief disciples; had declared, that of such is the kingdom of heaven; and that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God perfected praise. But, if they were not baptized, and brought into a visible covenant relation to the general body of his followers; the latter would see, that this love issued in no single *apparent act* of recognition as of old; and that, in this omission, there was a marvellous change in the divine procedure, under the gospel, compared with that under the law, and even before the time of Moses. They would consider their little ones relatively reduced from their former standing, and religious privileges. The result would certainly be, inquiry and answers, remonstrance and vindication. But, strange to say, not a word of the kind is heard from the lips of the Christian Israelites any more than from those converted from heathenism. Can this be accounted for, in any other way, than by taking it for granted, that the children were baptized as well as their parents—who would experience the most lively interest in the spiritual good of their families, and in their recognition of them as parts of the great Christian community. The pleasure which most, if not all, affectionate parents feel, when attention is paid, or kindness shown, to their children, is well known; and, doubtless, those in the church at Corinth were endowed with this apparently universal property of human nature.

On the text, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God;’ Mark x. 14; Dr. Halley justly observes:—‘Had our Lord said *of these*, his words might have been limited to those children specifically; but the words, *of such*, clearly refer to children generally—all such children. The words are, surely, not to be expounded, as meaning that these children were *not* of the kingdom of heaven. So to expound them, would be a wonderful instance of making the art and mystery of ‘hermeneutics’ [or criticism] ‘explain away the obvious sense of the passage. Can any one imagine our Lord is to be understood as saying, Suffer little children to come unto me; for, although they are not of the kingdom of heaven, yet men and women of similar dispositions are? If these children themselves did not belong to the kingdom of heaven, the words of our Lord assign no reason for suffering them to approach him. He, the King in Zion, publicly acknowledges

'them as his own subjects, and proclaims their title in the 'most unequivocal terms.' vol. ii. p. 63.

Dr. Wall, referring to Matt. xviii. 5; Mark ix. 37; Luke ix. 48; says, 'Our Saviour, holding a little child in his arms, 'and saying to his disciples, "Whosoever shall receive this 'child" [in Matthew and Mark it is 'one such little child,' or, 'one of such children'] "in my name, receiveth me." 'The ordinary meaning of the word "receive," in the books 'of the New Testament, even where it stands alone, is well 'known to all readers of Scripture, to be, "to receive, or 'admit, to a brotherhood or fellowship in Christianity;" as, '(to name one place of forty,) Rom. xv. 7, St. Paul commands 'those dissenters in opinions "to receive one another." But, 'when Christ, moreover, adds here these words, "in my 'name," it more plainly still imports, that they should be 'received to be his members or his children, belonging to 'him, or, as I once before deduced, the import of the like 'phrase, as *Tou Christou ontes*, being Christ's, or Christians.' vol. iii. p. 387.

If these citations present a correct view of the language of our Lord, (and I hardly see how it can be doubted); and if the Corinthians understood it in this sense; would they not have expected, that their children should be taken into the society of Christians, or be admitted among the disciples of Christ? And, if so introduced, their baptism becomes all but unquestionable. Those who suppose our Lord exhibited these children simply to show that men and women must be as meek, humble, and gentle, as these children, before they can enter the kingdom of God; might fairly assume, that, had he taken a dove in his hand, or a lamb in his bosom, the same end would have been equally answered!

OBSERVATION III.—*That baptized parents would feel anxious for the baptism of their children, from its supposed personal benefits.*—However lightly some persons may estimate Infant Baptism; and however others, from education, prejudice, or denominational connexions, may be opposed to it, in the present day; we may rest assured, that the mass of early proselytes to the gospel would be of a very different mind. This would arise, not merely from the fact, that children had long been circumcised, and their forefathers, and foremothers baptized in their infancy, but from the privileges they would associate with this rite, when personally received. On reading several gospel declarations about baptism, in various parts of the New Testament, and, doubtless,

hearing much on the same topic; their anxiety to have their own children baptized would be considerably stimulated. Nor, would their wishes be less intense, because, in the absence of inspired men to explain their own epistles and observations, like more learned persons in our own times, they would attribute results to this ordinance which were never intended by the sacred writers. Take a few passages as examples:—‘Except a man’—*any one*—‘be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ John iii. 5. ‘He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ Mark xvi. 16. ‘The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us.’ 1 Pet. iii. 21. ‘All the people were baptized of John.’ Luke iii. 21. ‘Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.’ Acts xxii. 16. ‘So many of us as were baptized into’ [*eis*, or unto] ‘Jesus Christ, were baptized into’ [*eis*, or unto] ‘his death.’ Rom. vi. 3. ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach’ [proselyte] ‘all nations,’ [by] ‘baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Matt. xxviii. 19.

A common-place view of these passages, or of the like sentiments taught by inspired men, must have led many persons of ordinary spiritual discernment—those who were themselves but babes in Christ, and not a few of whom needed to be taught what were the first principles of the oracles of God, especially in the Corinthian congregation—to attach great importance to baptism, and to imagine that some considerable, if not saving, benefit might be derived from it. Even learned divines of the present day do the like. Nor would the logical acumen of the first imperfectly-taught Christian converts have necessarily preserved them from similiar conclusions. Hence, they would most earnestly desire that their beloved children should participate in this sacrament, in order to obtain the supposed attendant benefits. At all events, as previously noted, inquiries would be instituted on the question, and responses would be given; and both, doubtless—as in the matter about circumcising the children of converted gentiles—would have found a place in the chronicle of the Acts of the Apostles—that is, provided Infant Baptism were neglected or condemned by the first ministers of Christ. But no such inquiries are found, no such difficulties were felt; and, therefore, we again conclude, that their children must have been baptized. We have no reason to infer, that the early Christians would not regard the baptism of their own children with as much interest as the ancient Hebrews regarded the

circumcision of theirs, and have felt as desirous that the little ones should undergo this gospel ceremony as the Jews had felt concerning the circumcision and baptism of their children. History assures us that such was the case in after years; and we can conceive of no reasons for supposing that it was not the same in the days of the apostles. But, if children were actually baptized, without noise or notice, and as a matter of course or of custom, by the disciples or apostles of Christ, as they had been circumcised and baptized, for many previous centuries, by Hebrew priests, without any specific record of even a single instance, the silence of the Corinthians, and of all other Christian parents, is readily accounted for; but it can be on no other reasonable grounds.

Our opponents attribute the origin and spread of Infant Baptism, in the post-apostolic churches, to the misunderstanding of the words of our Lord, in his conversation with Nicodemus. Mr. Gibbs observes, 'The practice of baptizing infants arose out of a belief, that baptism was absolutely necessary to salvation; and upon this principle it was strenuously defended by all the early Pedobaptists: they ascribed to the baptismal water, the power of illuminating, sanctifying, and regenerating the soul, and thus they led the people to conclude, that unless they and their children were baptized, they could not be saved.' He then quotes several expressions, to confirm his views, from Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Clemens, and Tertullian; adding, 'This opinion, respecting the necessity of baptism, originated, probably, in a misconception of our Lord's words, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." The early Fathers evidently considered, that, to be born of water, referred to baptism; and that the kingdom of God meant a state of future happiness; and, hence, they concluded, that no man could be saved unless he was baptized, an inference which is correct, if the premises are admitted.' p. 255. Mr. J. Stennett adduces the same argument. He says, 'It ought to be considered that this custom' [of baptizing infants] 'seems to have taken its rise from a misinterpretation of those words of our Saviour, Except, &c.' p. 73.

But the real question here is, When did this belief first arise? For it seems, that Justin, Clemens, Tertullian, &c.—all real primitive fathers—who lived near the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, found this rite very general, or even universal, in the churches. Were not the Corinthian Christians, and their contemporary religionists, as likely to



entertain similar notions, respecting the saving virtues of baptism, as these learned and lauded fathers, or as any persons living in the intermediate period? If the practice arose from a desire in parents to save the souls of their infants, it was as likely to have sprung up in the times of the apostles as afterwards. It is certain, that many other notions, contrary to the pure and simple gospel, originated in their day; since much in Paul's letters to them was written in order to expose and counteract them.

Can Mr. Gibbs, or any of his brethren, fix on the origin of Infant Baptism, during any part of the second century? If not, may we not look for it in the first—to nearly the close of which the life of John the Evangelist is said to have been protracted? And, if in any part of this age, why not near the middle of it; provided it were a new practice in the churches? And, had such a gross heresy and deadly evil, as our opponents regard it, been introduced, on the most limited scale, on such false and sinful grounds; is it not probable we should have heard, if but a few words, from Peter or Paul, or James or John, in condemnation of a rite so bad, so puerile, so absurd, so destructive to the souls of men—a rite, so likely, and even so certain, to spread all over Christendom, and to enter into every converted family—at least, where the parents devoutly loved their little ones, but who did not understand the Gospel of Christ on this question or, in the same sense, as our present Antipedobaptist brethren!

If, moreover, Infant Baptism be, and early became, such a fearful and widely diffused evil as our antagonists aver, deluding and destroying human souls in untold numbers; and, as the Spirit of God must have clearly foreseen this gigantic and wide-spreading mischief; does it not seem remarkable, that the saints were not forewarned against it, as they were against other rising, and not more ruinous, notions and practices? Men were put on their guard against Antichrist, the Man of Sin, bad people, and unchristian conduct. Paul says to Timothy, 'This know also, that in the last days, 'perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their 'own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural 'affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, 'despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form 'of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such 'turn away.' 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. But, in this long and apparently

complete enumeration of coming iniquities, nor in any other found in the New Testament, do we find the term Pedobaptists, nor a single intimation, that the heresy of Infant Baptism would hereafter spring up in the congregations of professing Christians; and should be avoided as one of the awful and fearful evils and mischiefs of later times. In truth, there are few false doctrines or doings in Christendom, against which we are not premonished and forearmed in the Word of God. And yet, marvellous as it may appear, one of the greatest evils of all, if our Baptist opponents are to be credited—Infant Baptism—though clearly foreseen by the omniscient God, is, without a word, guarding his people against adopting such a soul-deluding and soul-destroying practice! While, on the other hand, to say the least of it, numerous hints and intimations are given us, in both the Old and New Testaments, that such a ceremony had been common in the congregations of God for full sixteen hundred years!

Again, it is clear that the first converts from Judaism and idolatry to Christianity were as likely to fall into the error—if it be one—of having their children formally inducted to the new system of religion with themselves, as any that succeeded: in fact, even more so, provided it were not practised in apostolic times. If, during the first age of Christianity, such perverted views of certain texts of Scripture had not been adopted or acted upon, the succeeding community would have become fully indoctrinated in Antipedobaptist opinions, and accustomed to a different course; and the commencement of baptizing children, say, in the second century, would have been a matter of immense difficulty, and been regarded as an unauthorized and sinful innovation; while, in the third and fourth centuries, the obstacles to the introduction of such a novel institution would have been increasingly augmented among all the sincere disciples of Christ—and opposed by them with the utmost determination. On the first formation of Christian societies, by persons whose children had, up to that moment, been joint-members with themselves of their previous religious associations, and where the proselyte baptism of whole families was of frequent occurrence; the union, in question, would have been expected, and contended for; and, of course, no surprise would have been felt by any one at its observance. The innovation, if such it were, would have been easy at first; but almost impracticable two hundred years afterwards. We also know, that, supposing an erroneous interpretation of scriptural

language induced the baptizing of children, the first converts from the Jews and the gentiles were as likely to fall into it as any of their followers; for it is, on all hands admitted, that the baptism of children was common, if not universal, among the Hebrews and heathens, while in their former condition, and up to the time of Christ, and even to the day of their conversion to Christianity. As just said, their views, on many points, were very erroneous, and their mistakes quite flagrant, particularly on the question of the efficacy of religious rites, ceremonies, and priestly ablutions. This we gather from the contents of Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, &c.—epistles sent purposely to correct their numerous blunders. See *Mosheim's Ecc. Hist.* cent. ii. pt. ii. chap. iii. In a word, Christian Infant Baptism, if not of divine appointment, was more likely to have originated among the first converts to the gospel, than among any of its subsequent adherents; and if it did not actually commence with them, the difficulties of its doing so would have been immensely enhanced in every succeeding age, however superstitious the professors of Christianity might have become.

Further, whatever dispute may have arisen, as to whether the Jewish proselytes were of two classes—those of the gate and those of righteousness—or only of one, those made such by circumcision and baptism; or respecting the characters and attainments of the strangers incorporated with the Hebrew people; or whether the converts to Israel were sprinkled, or dipped, or both; I believe none has occurred, at least, of late years, as to the fact, that after the apostolic age, the Jews received no proselytes except by baptism. The admissions made by our Baptist brethren, and cited in a previous section, render it needless to quote further authorities in proof of this practice among that people. Now, the question is, How, then, came the Jews, after the apostolic times, to baptize all proselytes—including old and young, male and female—as proved also in a preceding part of this treatise? Two motives only can be assigned for their doing so—to imitate the Christians, or to follow the practice of their venerated ancestors. 'The great improbability of the Jews adopting, for the first time subsequently to the death of Christ, a religious rite which was well known to be the initiatory rite to Christianity,' is manifest to all thinking people. 'Assuming, that the Jews practised that rite before, we can account for their not giving it up simply because the Christians had adopted it; but, trace it as we please to Jewish customs and rites; it seems

‘utterly incredible, that, *after* it had become the symbol and ‘badge of the religious party, which, of all others, perhaps, ‘the Jews most bitterly hated, any consideration whatever ‘should have induced them to *begin* to practise it. On the ‘other hand, we have in favour of the hypothesis, that proselyte baptism was practised anterior to the time of our Lord, ‘some strong and corroborative evidence’—which has been adduced in its proper place. *Kitto’s Cyc. Bib. Lit. in loc.*

Wherefore, as we cannot account for the custom of the Jews baptizing their proselytes, after the commencement of the Christian era, except by tracing it back even to the times of Moses ; so it is impossible fairly to account for the baptism of children unto Christianity, not long after the death of the apostles, without tracing it up to the times in which they lived and preached the gospel. That the early followers of Christ did not copy the practice from the heathen, is unquestionable. That they did not invent it so soon, and adopt it so universally, is equally manifest. Hence, our conclusion is, that they followed the traditions of their fathers, who received directions immediately from the apostles, and who, under ‘divine advice,’ followed the custom long observed among the ancient children of Israel.

It is further worthy of note, that, according to Dr. Kitto, ‘There is no *direct* evidence that this rite’ [proselyte baptism] ‘was practised by the Jews before the second or third century ‘of the Christian era ; but, that it was practised by them ‘then, necessitates the inquiry, when and how did such a ‘custom arise among them?’ *Ib.* According to Mr. Noel and his brethren, this ceremonial was common among the Jews in the time of Christ. ‘Every one was familiar with ‘the baptismal rite, every one talked of it ; it admitted ‘proselytes into communion with the Jews . . . Jewish women ‘were accustomed to witness the baptism of female proselytes ‘ . . . The baptism of proselytes was practised by the Jews in ‘the time of our Lord.’ Yet, no *direct* mention is made of it for at least a hundred years after the death of the last apostle. It was practised all that time, and, still, no evidence of it is left on record ! And, still, on the lack of direct evidence of Infant Baptism, during the same time, our opponents base one of their best arguments against the practice of this rite during the apostolic age. But, it seems, that had it been as notorious and familiar, as Mr. Noel’s proselyte dipping, from John the Baptist to the death of John the apostle, it might not have been mentioned till the second



or third century of the Christian era, without anything very incongruous and singular in the case—just as circumcision and baptism were continuously practised, under the law, for hundreds of years, without a single record of them being given in the Old Testament.

It is well known, to all persons acquainted with the proceedings of the early churches and their office-bearers, that, when any matter of heresy, disorder, or breach of the early traditions of religion occurred, especially if deemed of moment by the holy men and ministers of the age; convocations of pastors, then designated bishops, or presbyters, were convened, the innovations discussed, and resolutions arrived at and published for the information and guidance of the Christian public. Some of these meetings were called confessedly about topics which to us appear of very minor interest, if not quite non-essential—as concerning the precise day of keeping Easter, and others not much more momentous. But, strange to tell, Infant Baptism creeps into the churches, spreads widely, and does a world of mischief; and yet, not a single gathering of the Christian Fathers is convened to expose and suppress it! Of all the evils that ever assailed the cause of Christ, this, Dr. Byron and others tell us, is among the worst, if it be not the parent, of every other; while not a single convocation is held to do it away! A fearful practice, it is said, sprang up in the second or third century, utterly unknown to the apostles and their immediate disciples; and is allowed to continue even without a single recorded meeting to check its growth! A council of bishops was called, it is true, about Infant Baptism, in the year 253; but, marvellous to relate, it was to settle the important question,—whether children must be baptized precisely on the eighth day after their birth—or whether they might undergo the ceremony before or after that day. But not a word escapes these reverend divines condemning their being baptized in their childhood! Alas! if our Baptist brethren are right respecting the origin and the evils of Infant Baptism, the early pastors and churches were assuredly most grossly ignorant, or indifferent about the truth, or they wickedly connived at a most pernicious and soul-destroying delusion. Reader, ‘Believest thou this?’

There is another circumstance confirmatory of the idea, that an institution may be long observed by the Church of God, while most of its administrators omit to chronicle the fact. ‘It is somewhat strange that, in consulting the writings of

'the apostolical Fathers, no mention is made of the Lord's supper in Barnabas, Polycarp, or Clement of Rome, but only in the writings of Ignatius is there any reference to the subject; and even supposing the passages to be genuine, which has been doubted, the allusions are slight and very general. Most of the early apologists of Christianity also are silent as to this ordinance. Justin Martyr, however, has given two descriptions of the ordinance in nearly the same words.' *Faiths of the World*. That Christ instituted the Lord's supper is certain; that it was duly observed when Christian societies were gathered and organized, or during the later part of the apostolic age; we think our opponents will not deny. Yet, only the slightest and vaguest notice of it is recorded by only one out of four of the earliest men of note, subsequent to the death of the first apostles. In this respect the Lord's supper is about parallel to that of Infant Baptism—which is scarcely mentioned, as having been practised during the time above referred to, though it was undoubtedly duly observed all the while, equally with the Lord's supper.

OBSERVATION IV.—*Many, if not all, the converts to Christianity did really associate their children with themselves in their religious professions.*—This was done, at least, through circumcision, and, we assume, also through water-baptism. Twenty-five years after the day of pentecost many thousands of the Jews, who believed in Christ as the Messiah, were zealous of the law, and complained of the apostle Paul for teaching the gentiles that their children ought not to be circumcised. Acts xxi. 20, 21. Serious contentions were the result of this charge against the apostle of the gentiles. Hence, the circumcision of their own Jewish children is apparent beyond all doubt; and, therefore, the religious association of their children with themselves is morally demonstrated. The practice of circumcising the children of believing Hebrews was then evidently acquiesced in by the apostle; and, doubtless, it continued many years longer, till the parties became more simply Christian and better enlightened, or their national policy came to an end, and weakened their respect for this ancient introductory rite. See also chap. xv. 1, 5. The administration of this ceremony to the children of the gentile proselytes was, at the same time, strenuously advocated and insisted on by the Judaizing brethren; while yet firmly resisted by the great apostle.

'That the Mosaic ceremonies,' says Mr. Hall, 'were universally practised by the believers of Jewish extraction, is

'manifest from various parts of Scripture; and with respect to the church at Jerusalem, is especially affirmed by James. "Thou seest, brother," said he, addressing Paul, "how many thousand" [myriads of] "Jews are there who believe, and they are all zealous for the law." The apostle of the gentiles, with all his zeal in the assertion of their liberties, conformed to them himself; partly from respect to the Jewish people, whom he was most anxious, by every lawful compliance, to conciliate, and partly from a tender consideration of the infirmities of his weaker brethren, not yet sufficiently confirmed in the freedom of the gospel.... But, while he displayed this amiable and condescending spirit, he never disguised his convictions, that the obligation attached to the Mosaic rites was dissolved, and that the gospel was alone the perfect rule of faith and practice. p. 272.

It is evident, says Mr. Jerram, that the Christian Jews took it for granted that they already constituted the true church, and that Christianity was to be grafted upon it; that theirs was the parent stock, and that the religion of Christ was to grow out of it; that there was nothing to surrender, but something to add; that it was precisely the same religion, only under a somewhat different modification; and that the transition to what was novel in the system, was really made by a compliance with a rite with which they had always been familiar; and that baptism was appointed [perpetuated] 'as the external badge of the new profession.' p. 61. We also learn, that the great body of professing converts to Christianity, during, at least, the first quarter of a century after the Saviour's ascension, never appear to have imagined that their children were not to be reckoned with themselves, as members of the general church, as they had always been previous to their becoming Christians. Not a word, concerning the excommunication of their little ones, had ever been heard. Had such an excision been even hinted at by their teachers, there would have been far more heat and contention among them, than arose from discovering that the children of gentile converts were admitted to religious privileges without circumcision.

'The great object of the Judaizing teachers,' observe Conybeare and Howson, 'was to turn the newly-converted Christians into Jewish proselytes, who should differ from other Jews only in the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. In their view the natural posterity of Abraham were still as much as ever the theocratic nation, entitled to God's exclusive

‘favour, to which the rest of mankind could only be admitted ‘by becoming Jews.’ vol. i. p. 521. This party, at least, had no idea that their children should be excluded from their covenant privileges and connexion with themselves. Their aim was to have all their children circumcised and baptized unto Christ, as was done aforetime unto Moses. Those who underwent the latter rite only were regarded as inferior to such as experienced both of them. ‘In short, they kept the ‘Gentile converts, who would not submit to circumcision, on ‘the same footing as the proselytes of the gate, and treated the ‘circumcised alone as *proselytes of righteousness*.’ *Ib.* p. 522.

Moreover, there can hardly be a doubt, in the minds of reflecting people, that these said Jewish converts would have claimed for their families the like ritual observances, and covenanted privileges, which they themselves enjoyed, as far as their capacities enabled them; since they had always mutually partaken of the like, under the former dispensation. Their own parents had been baptized before them, and they themselves also, when little children. The fathers had been circumcised in infancy, and their own male infants also. If, therefore, the children of believing parents, either at Corinth or Jerusalem, were not to be religiously united with their believing fathers and mothers, some command, prohibitory of the connexion, at least, in this uniting ordinance, would certainly have been required. And if they were not baptized with them, or like them, inquiry would have been the result, and answers would have been returned; and the sacred historians would, doubtless, have mentioned it. The question, then, would have been felt of greater moment than in the present day, when it has called into existence numberless publications, displaying great zeal and diligence on both sides, or, rather, on every side, of the subject. But, in the Scriptures, we have nothing of the sort—the subject is not even once mooted, and, consequently, we infer, that all the little ones were baptized unto Christ, as others had been previously unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.

It has been objected, ‘That, as in these contentions about ‘circumcising the infants of Christianized gentiles, nothing is ‘said concerning Infant Baptism being administered in its ‘place, and answering the like purpose, of introducing the ‘young into the congregations of believers; the probability ‘is, that the practice was unknown in those times, and that ‘parents did not expect their children to be baptized at all. ‘Paul, it is argued, does not say, that, as baptism now answers



'the same purpose that circumcision did formerly, and as you baptize your children, you need not circumcise them; while your children will remain in the same covenant relation to the Almighty and the church, as they did before.' Had baptism been instituted in the place of circumcision; had that rite been intended at once, entirely and universally, to supersede it in the Christian church; then, there would be some plausibility in the objection. But, we do not place water-baptism in the room of the ancient circumcision; having all along regarded it as a concurrent ceremony, administered during the whole period of the Levitical dispensation, running parallel with that rite from Moses to John—from the Red Sea to the Jordan—the one being a dedication to the Abrahamic covenant especially, the other to the Mosaic economy. And our settled conviction is, that the apostles and primitive Christians were of the same judgment. Their conduct cannot be fairly accounted for on any contrary supposition.

The bloody rite of circumcision, having accomplished its purpose when the Redeemer died, and being incompatible with the milder dispensation of the gospel, might have been done away entirely; while the other ancient ceremony, illustrative of mental purification, might have remained in force; but, to meet the prejudices of the Jews, circumcision was tolerated awhile by the holy apostles. There might be a continuance of the one institution and an extinction of the other; just as the bloody sacrifices might have been done away, and oblations, first-fruits, peace-offerings, or pecuniary contributions, remained; or as the paschal lamb might no longer be roasted, and the eucharistical part of the supper might continue to the end of time; or, if, as suggested, the act of circumcision was always accompanied with water-baptism, the former painful part might be done away, and the latter simple and painless part might be preserved in the churches. At any rate, we have seen, that circumcision and water-baptism co-existed in the time of Moses; and we have rendered it highly probable, that they both were administered to male infants from his day to that of our Lord's ascension to glory. In our view, Christian baptism succeeded Jewish baptisms, initiatory, purifying, or both. The dispute, to which we have just alluded, had respect only to the continuance of circumcision, leaving the question of baptism entirely untouched—just as preaching and prayer were continued, while burnt offerings and priestly services came to an end.

However, the point we have aimed to prove here is, that the converted Hebrews, by circumcising their children, and thereby bringing them into the same covenant with themselves, evidently understood, that the former relation, existing between entire families and the congregations, was, in their view of the case, still in existence; and that, I think, is rendered unquestionable. In a word, it seems the Israelites had been accustomed to a two-fold bond of union between their male children and the Jewish church or congregation—circumcision and baptism. Their complaint now was, that the children of the gentile converts were to be united with the church or congregation of the gospel by only one of these ceremonies—being admitted on much easier or less impressive terms than their own beloved offspring. This, most probably, was one of the grounds of the contention about circumcision in apostolic times; and this appears to be a natural assumption under the then state of the first converts from Judaism to Christianity.

I may add, that Paul, and Peter, and James must have been well aware, that while the Christianized Jews circumcised their children, the latter would be regarded as being thereby brought into a religious covenant-relation with their parents, as of old; and yet, not a word is directly said against this act, or the consequent relationship. Moreover, the results attending or following infant circumcision into Christian congregations would be as pernicious as baptizing children into the same associations. The subjects would be equally unconscious, the like spiritual pride might be engendered, and the same absurdities and mischief would be the result. All this the inspired men knew full well; and still they were silent on the question—leaving the practice to rectify itself in the course of time, and with growing gospel light. Therefore, they could not have viewed the consecration of children to God by circumcision, or baptism, or both, such a dreadful evil as represented by our enlightened and sensitive brethren!

OBSERVATION V.—*The case of female communion affords a subject for strikingly illustrating our proposition.*—Let it be remembered, that, under the former economy, women had partaken of the passover equally with the men: at least, no Baptist opponent will dispute or question this assumption. God had often shown them peculiar tokens of his kindness and love; they were among the holiest and most useful of his people; and were occasionally signalized for their great virtues and worth. So, under the economy of the Gospel,

they were among the most affectionate, devout, faithful, and useful followers of Christ; the closest adherents of the apostles, and received numberless expressions of the divine benevolence and care. Now, suppose, that, notwithstanding all this, it had been proposed to preclude them from the table of the Lord—and there is no plain literal record of their having ever attended it, nor any command for them to do so; any more than there is a plain literal account of Infant Baptism, or any direct injunction to baptize a baby—would not this preclusion have caused such general and earnest inquiry, and consequent explanation, as must have found a place in the chronicles of a people, whose apparent neglect of the poor widows, in the daily distribution of charity, and many other equally minor matters, are sufficiently recorded? But, on this point, we find no inquiry, and read of no explanations.

Our conclusion, therefore, is, that the pious women partook of the Lord's supper, the same as the male members of those particular societies which were ultimately formed, and in which this sacrament was duly celebrated. In this deduction all our brethren will readily concur. Yet, we believe the surprise that would have been felt at the exclusion of holy females from this Christian feast, would have been equally intense, in the minds of pious parents, especially, if of Jewish origin, at the exclusion of their children, from the covenant and privileges of Christianity, and from the initiatory rite through which they were obtained. The Hebrew passover and Hebrew baptism, if coeval in their origin, were regularly observed by the same nation, and existed as twin ordinances, at least, from the exodus, till the death of Christ—and were, in an abridged or modified form, to continue to the end of the world. To have excluded women from the Christian passover, and children from the Christian baptism, would have been equally a subject of wonder, of contention, or, at least, of grave inquiry. But, in neither case, was there any dispute; and, therefore, I infer, that in neither case was any exclusion of their former subjects or communicants.

SECTION SIXTH.—*The spiritual relationships created by the baptism to Moses and to Christ are fully developed, and just in the same manner.*—As soon as the Israelites had been baptized unto Moses, they were treated as the Lord's special charge, taught the good laws of his kingdom, corrected when they transgressed, and, when obedient, graciously com-

forted in all their providential afflictions. So, when the early converts to the doctrines of the cross were baptized, they were taken under the special care and charge of the apostles, taught, corrected, and comforted, as catechumens in Christian seminaries. Stovel says, 'Having once been baptized, and 'entering into Christ, we are subject to his discipline, whatever the event may be. Whether we go forward to life, or 'turn back again unto death, the vow of God is upon us, and, 'in love or wrath, his law and honour must be vindicated.' In God's dealings with the Israelites, we find their children regarded as the objects of his covenant love, bounty, and care, equally with their parents, and those, too, of the most holy and obedient among them. Hence, on this principle, their baptism in the sea, at all events, so far as the first generation of the emancipated Hebrews was concerned, is placed beyond all cogent disputation.

In the New Testament, we also find, that the children of baptized disciples, believers, or Christians, were the manifest objects of apostolic and pious regard, as being in the baptismal covenant, equally with their parents; as heirs of the same promises, and subjects in the same kingdom of God; whose angels beheld the face of their Father in heaven; as patterns of humility; and as believers in Christ. This, also, was the case of children whose parents had been recently brought out of the ranks of heathenism and idolatry, and who had never been previously devoted to the true God, by circumcision or any other initiatory rite than that of baptism. The young Ephesians are required 'to obey their parents in all things,' ch. vi. 1; so were the children of the church at Colosse, because it was 'well-pleasing to the Lord.' ch. iii. 20. And so, doubtless, were all the children found in the other apostolical communions. But how came these children to be the special charge of the apostles, and to be subject to their direct instruction and discipline? Not, simply, because they were the offspring of converted parents; for many of them were probably born before their parents had heard the gospel at all; but, evidently—according to Mr. Stovel's reasoning, in reference to the Hebrews baptized unto Moses—because they had been individually consecrated to Christ in baptism.

As the Israelites, old and young, became subject to Moses only through their baptism, the first Christians became subject to the apostles only by being baptized into their religion. The apostles had no more ministerial or pastoral authority over unbaptized men, women, or children, than Moses had



over the Hebrews, before they were initiated to him in the Red Sea, or than I have officially over a Baptist congregation, or than a Baptist minister has over mine, or than any preacher has over persons who never listen to his discourses; that is, none at all. When gentile families were proselyted to Judaism, by circumcision and baptism, they all became subject to the laws of Moses; the little ones were to be watched over, taught, purified, corrected, and cared for, equally with their seniors—by the priests and prophets of Israel. Their youth did not deprive them of any benefit they were capable of enjoying. They, indeed, were to be dealt with as if they had been of the original stock of Abraham. Paul, certainly, exercised spiritual authority over children, as his own appeal to them clearly proves; but, then, it was only over those who were within the *Ecclesia*—the baptized congregation—and upon him rested the daily care of them all. 2 Cor. xi. 28. 'What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do ye not judge them also that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth.' 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

By the way, it was on the same principle that Paul, in the epistles, directed particularly to the saints and regenerated people of God, refers frequently and emphatically to the unconverted members of their congregations, as being, like the little ones above referred to, under the special supervision and care of the ministers of Christ. Those who would contend, that Paul could not have meant to address any but the truly and spiritually converted, at Ephesus and elsewhere, or, at least, only such as communicated at the Lord's table; would, on the like grounds, have to account for his directly addressing children in the same epistles—since they unquestionably were not communicants or full members of the inner churches of these places. Children, and the general hearers of the Gospel, must have been present in about the same capacities—babes in years, and children of a larger growth—to learn the will and ways of God from those outward ordinances, intended, by the preaching of the gospel, to prepare them for the true and higher fellowship of the saints. It is hardly questionable, that, in writing his epistles to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse, and to the other congregations addressed by him, Paul meant to say something appropriate to all the people who generally composed them; just as a good minister of the present day appeals to the different classes, ages, and characters, commonly composing his audience, and to no others. This fact explains how it occurred, that certain

unconverted and immoral persons were sometimes directly appealed to as well as children; because such, he expected, would be found in their worshipping assemblies, as ordinary hearers of the Gospel. But, he never *directly* addresses kings and nobles, nor Judaizing and false teachers, nor avowed and open enemies of Christianity, in those letters; because they were not likely to form any part of the assemblies in which they were to be read. He spake *of* those that were without, and not immediately *to* them.

To return. The baptism of parents might be the motive or occasion of the baptism of their children, as the circumcision of Abraham, and of heathen proselytes to Judaism, was the reason of the circumcision of their children and households; but it was only the personal introduction of the latter to the gospel economy, that constituted them the objects of the apostles' care, the lambs of their fold, and the juvenile pupils in the school of the Saviour. As the Hebrews, of all ages, were formerly brought under the leadership and legislation of Moses, by their baptism; so, now, it is, through the like initiation, that either parents or their children can be regarded as avowed and ostensible disciples in Christian seminaries; be scripturally entitled to tuition in the knowledge of God; or, be qualified to enjoy the external privileges which a proper religious status conveys. Unbaptized persons, whether Jews or gentiles, were regarded as mere Jews and gentiles, without the pale of the gospel commonwealth; as unlikely to be regular or constant worshippers of God in Christian congregations; just as the Israelites in Egypt, and the heathens in Tyre and Sidon, were without the pale of the Hebrew institution, till they were baptized unto Moses; or like excommunicated professors of the gospel, who were viewed and treated 'as heathen men and publicans.' Matt. xviii. 17.

This fact will account for the willingness of converts to the Christian faith to be baptized, in order to be fully initiated into its mysteries, to be numbered with the disciples, and to be entitled to similar advantages. The general readiness and desire of the Jews, in John's time, to be baptized by him, and afterwards, by the twelve or the seventy disciples of Christ, can be accounted for on no other reasonable grounds. They must have felt, that this rite prepared them for, and introduced them to, something good—political, social, moral, or spiritual—or they never would have submitted so readily to these baptizings—especially had they been by immersion! Let it be borne in mind also, that John, the disciples, and the

apostles of Christ, were always willing, always ready, and apparently glad, at any time, and in any place, to baptize all that desired, or were inclined, to receive this rite, whether they were solitary individuals, family circles, or congregated thousands. There was no delay, no postponement, no orders to come again to-morrow, or when better instructed, or when evidences of spiritual conversion were more fully developed; or when the crowds of hearers became thinned; or when some more convenient spot was found, in which there was living or running water sufficient to immerse them. Whoever expressed themselves willing to undergo the ceremony, were then and there baptized unto Christ. And this was always done so speedily, that none of the attendant crowds seem to have waited a single day or hour for their turn; as many must have done for weeks, and even for months, had the plan of dipping been adopted by John, as our opponents contend; and more specially so, if he had to examine them personally, and hear every one of them confess his sins, in detail, promise repentance, and exhibit a satisfactory reformation of life! The administrator, as well as the people, were conscious of certain advantages to be legitimately obtained by this ordinance; and, by inference, were not ignorant, that they should experience a loss, to a greater or less extent, by not being Scripturally baptized. To undergo this rite was deemed equal to be enlisted into the army of Christ, the Captain of salvation; or to be inducted to the association of great and good men; or to be enrolled as pupils in the school of divine wisdom and knowledge; or to be written down as expectants of advantages in some benevolent institution. Hence, the readiness, both of the agents and subjects, for this initiatory ceremonial.

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To recur again, for a moment or two, to the *Mode* of Baptism.—The baptism of such vast numbers, as evidently came to John, and were baptized by him, presents a difficulty which Mr. Noel gets over, by supposing, that, ‘in all probability, ‘he baptized almost entirely by the ministry of others.’ *Mode*, p. 79. Of this aid, however, we have not the slightest intimation in the Word of God. When such agency was employed in the case of the baptism ascribed to Christ, we are informed, that not he himself, but his disciples, administered the rite. It is intimated that Peter himself did not baptize Cornelius and his family, but commanded others to do it. Our author, feeling that the difficulty is not entirely removed by his ‘all

'probability,' goes on:—'But if great numbers were baptized, it is easy to conceive that it might be administered in such a manner, as to occupy little more time than sprinkling. Why might not the converts enter the stream in companies, and, dipping themselves beneath the water, receive from him the benediction at the same time with the imposition of his hands?' *Ib.* I can readily conceive all this, and even much more novel and grotesque exhibitions; though I cannot readily fancy, how it could be correctly affirmed, that John or any of his assistants actually baptized them, seeing they dipped themselves, which is the real act of baptizing—according to the *dictum* of almost all our opponents. It will also be new to most readers, that for a minister merely to lay his hands on persons, and to pronounce a benediction, are regarded as a baptism administered by our clerical opponents! Where they found convenient places in the rocky, deep, and turbulent waters of the Jordan; or in the domestic reservoirs in Jerusalem; or in pools, from fifteen to fifty feet deep, in its neighbourhood, for, say, a thousand or even a hundred at a time, to get into, and to dip themselves entirely under water, before John or Peter gave them his benediction, and then placed his hands on them individually—all which Mr. Noel supposes—it is certainly not a little difficult to imagine!

As Mr. Noel derives his idea of baptism from that of proselytes, and supposes that John, and all baptizers after him, copied the original examples of the Hebrews—of course, leaving out the little proselytes, as if they were too small for remark!—I will cite from the Baptist Historian, Robinson, to show how the thing was supposed to be done by the Jews; and which will also show whence Mr. Noel, most likely, obtained the notion. 'The mode of purification was immersion in water. A river was preferred; but any collection of clean water, of a depth sufficient for dipping, would do. If a bath were necessary, a square with about four feet and half depth of water was requisite. The proselyte was not to jump in, as if he were bathing, but he was to walk in leisurely. A woman was to be conducted by three women; and when notice was given that she was up to the neck in the water, the three judges, either withdrawing or turning their backs, she plunged herself once into the water. Some dipped themselves naked, others in a thin garment that would admit the water everywhere, but none in any habit that might prevent the water from wetting all the body; for, if only a small deflection from the eye ran between the water and



‘the skin, the purification was judged partial and incomplete.’ p. 38. Here is Mr. Noel’s model for baptizing vast numbers nearly as fast as sprinkling them—barring the laying on of hands in the river, and pronouncing the benediction!

It is scarcely questionable, that Mr. Noel and his brethren depend more on the supposed dipping of the Jewish proselytes, for their immersion of converts to Christianity, than upon any other foundation. ‘That which we learn from the word *‘baptizo,’* [which proves nothing satisfactory on either side,] ‘we may also learn from the practice of the time when the ‘commission was given. When Jesus said to his disciples, “Go, ‘and baptize,” baptism was of a very familiar occurrence among ‘the Jews. As it was to be the initiatory rite of Christianity, as ‘it was already one of the initiatory rites of Judaism. When the ‘Jewish proselyte was baptized, his baptism was an immersion; ‘and, without an intimation to the contrary, the disciples must ‘understand, that when a Christian proselyte was to be bap- ‘tized, his baptism must also be an immersion. The same word ‘must necessarily express the same external act for both religions. ‘Since the convert to Judaism was immersed, in token of his ‘discipleship to Moses, and this was called his baptism; when ‘Jesus commanded his apostles to administer baptism, as a ‘token of discipleship to him, they must have understood ‘that baptism likewise to mean immersion.’ p. 126. The simple reader will probably be surprised to learn, that this chief, if not sole, argument for dipping proselytes in baptism, is not based on any part of God’s word; and that Robinson, Noel, nor anyone else, ever cites a plain and positive command or example of Scripture, to prove their point—the whole being based chiefly on the dogmas, if not on the inventions, of Hebrew Rabbis, or on inferences, the premises of which are most uncertain. Yet, on other occasions, we are roundly rated for diverging a single inch from the line of direct and positive declarations of divine revelation, in support of aspersion or Infant Baptism!

Mr. Noel fixes on the baptism of the Eunuch, as affording one of the best proofs of baptism by immersion. Let us attend to his argumentation on this point. ‘One such ‘instance of immersion is enough to prove the apostolic ‘practice; for, unless the apostles had generally immersed the ‘converts, Philip would certainly not have felt himself at ‘liberty to immerse the Ethiopian; if sprinkling had been ‘the practice of baptism in Jerusalem, where there was every ‘convenience of baths, Philip would certainly have preferred

‘sprinkling, where there was no convenience for immersion.’ [Mark that!] ‘He immersed, because the apostles immersed. ‘Go ye, and teach all nations, immersing them.’ *Mode*, p. 92. ‘As the Jews, therefore, baptized by immersion and the apostles were ordered by our Lord to baptize, without any further explanation of the word, they certainly must have understood the command to enjoin immersion, and did accordingly immerse the converts.’ *Ib.* p. 60. ‘It is utterly improbable that a man of wealth would cross the desert without having a supply of water for himself and his attendants more than sufficient for the required sprinkling, and, therefore, the Eunuch would have asked for baptism, before coming to the pond, if the rite had been performed by sprinkling.’ *Ib.* p. 90. ‘It is unlikely that Philip would propose, for no reason, that the Ethiopian should leave his chariot for an object which could be attained as well or better close beside it.’ *Ib.* p. 89. ‘We may be sure, that in that hot climate, a man of rank and wealth would not be without the comfort of water-skins on his journey, especially as he had before him the desert of Shur, which he must cross before he could reach the river.’ *Ib.* p. 90.

Mr. Noel had previously quoted, without remark, and therefore, I presume, with approval, the statement of *Witsius*, on proselyte baptism:—‘It was unlawful to baptize but in a natural current or collection of waters, as a river, lake, fountain, because, according to them, none could be duly baptized in water fetched from any place and received in artificial receptacles.’ *Ib.* p. 60. Gale also says, ‘A fountain or running stream, in the remotest times, was always judged *purest*, and most proper for purifications.’ p. 113. Rees affirms:—‘The early Christians went to a river, brook, or pool of fair water, and there discharged a good conscience towards God.’ p. 178. Carson adds, ‘The water of a fountain would soon become unfit for baptism, if used for the multitudes baptized by John.’ p. 424. ‘The priests of the temple did not wash in either the laver or its base, because then, the water in which they washed’ [however large the quantity] ‘would have been rendered impure by those who washed before or with them....The orientals wash at a falling stream, where each successive affusion is of clean water.’ *Pictorial Bible*. Now, let the reader put these several quotations together, and then say, if Philip and the Eunuch must not have descended to the running or living water for affusion baptism; even though the latter had ridden,

surrounded with a hundred goatskins of water? This is one of Mr. Noel's clearest instances of dipping, from which, in a great measure, he infers all the rest! His notions, that in Jerusalem there was every convenience of baths available for dipping the thousands of converts to Christianity; and no convenience for dipping the Eunuch in the waters of the desert; are founded on most erroneous views of the former locality, and corroborate our belief that, certainly, there was no dipping at all in the latter.

One or two further proofs of dipping. His object is, to discover 'every convenience' for immersing the three thousand on the day of pentecost. He quotes Dr. Robinson's 'Biblical Researches,' to settle the matter most triumphantly. 'The main dependence of Jerusalem for water, at the present day, is on its cisterns....Almost every private house in Jerusalem, of any size, is understood to have at least one or more cisterns, excavated in the soft limestone rock upon which the city is built.' He gives us a specimen of the manner in which all the better class of houses are supplied; and then refers to four cisterns, respectively 12, 15, 15, and 20 feet deep, under the houses, supplied with water during the rainy seasons, and preserved for family use during the ensuing six months. Here we certainly have baptistries numerous enough, secluded enough, dark enough, and, in all conscience, deep enough! But, how were the despised apostles, and the three thousand strangers, to get access to them, and then discreetly get into them, without polluting the whole supply for the next five or six months! Yet, Mr. Noel must mean, that they did actually get into these reservoirs, dusty and dirty as they might be; or he would not have adduced these domestic cisterns as an argument in favour of immersion! How much in want of proper accommodation, for dipping the three thousand, must he have felt, before having recourse to such a monstrous scheme! Let him or his friends make the like experiment in an eastern city of the present day, or anywhere else; and try to dip a few hundred people into the tanks of water preserved under or near dwelling-houses, for culinary or drinking uses, during the next three or four months; and see how he would succeed, except by force and violence, or a good round sum of money!

But these are not all his resources for immersing the three thousand converts. Jerusalem had pools filled with the floods from the higher grounds during the same rainy seasons. These, he assumes, were accessible to all—Jews or heretics,

and, I suppose, to sheep, horses, oxen, and asses also; and, in his imagination, they were surrounded with all proper conveniences for immersion, dressing, and undressing, as in modern Baptist chapels! Well, he quotes Dr. Robinson again, to prove that these pools had water enough. The *Upper Pool*, length, 316 feet, breadth, 200, *depth*, 18 feet. *Lower Pool*, length, 502 feet, breadth, between 245 and 275, *depth*, North end, 35 feet, South end, 42. *Pool of Hezekiah*, length, 250 feet, breadth, 144 feet, the depth not great. *Bethesda*, or *Sheep Pool*, length, 360 feet, breadth, 130, *depth*, 75 feet. Then, there are *Solomon's Pools*, *Lower*, *Middle*, and *Upper*, in depths, respectively 50, 39, and 25 feet. All this is innocently quoted to prove, that there was water enough to dip all the converts on the day of Pentecost! But, the real question, which every thoughtful reader will ask, is, was there not *too much*? to say nothing of its impurity and filth! How did the apostles, or their numerous assistants, stand in them, and safely immerse their converts? or how did their converts get in and dip themselves? Should some good brother reply, 'Did not John baptize thousands in the river of Jordan, which, at Bethabara, was broad, deep, rapid, and apparently, most inconvenient? why, then, not in the deep pools near Jerusalem?' But, the question is, 'Did the Harbinger actually do so?' I believe not. The language of the sacred historian proves nothing of the sort. If being 'baptized in the sea' involved no act of immersion; surely, being 'baptized in the river' cannot prove it. The dry bed of the one, and the dry banks of the other, may be placed in fair comparison.—To return to the proper subjects of baptism—

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OBSERVATION I.—*It is evident that children were regarded as members of the first churches addressed by the apostles.*—When I say churches, I use the word, in its broad and general sense, for congregations. It is certain that Paul directly addresses children as component parts of the *Ecclesiae*, or congregations, to whom he wrote his epistles. Take, for example, the passages before cited. These are found in his letters directed to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse; to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; to the persons who constituted the Christian assemblies in those cities; or, in other words, to the companies of the baptized, the people and the families who had forsaken Judaism or idolatry, had been consecrated to Christ, and composed the churches of those places. He does not here, as elsewhere, simply enjoin



the parents to admonish their children, as if they were out of the congregations in which the 'epistles were to be read;' but he speaks or writes directly to them, as he does to husbands and wives, as being integral members of these communions, equally with their fathers.

To assume, that they were grown up to manhood, and had previously been baptized, on a profession of their faith, is a groundless assumption; for, in that case, they would have been spoken to as young men and women; and such too they would have been reckoned at a much earlier period of life than with us, and as young people still are in most eastern countries. They were yet under their parents' care and control; were living beneath their roof; and were to obey them in all things. Their ages could not have been known by Paul; and whether they were five or fifteen years old, it had little to do with the purport of his admonition. One point may be assumed as settled, that no pastor or parent, among our opponents, would deem it inconsistent or inappropriate to address similar language to children of very tender age, even from two years old and under; and the like is done by them in our infant classes by some of them every Sabbath and week-day throughout the year. Now, assuming, that at Ephesus and Colosse the congregations amounted to five hundred persons—no very extravagant estimate—the children from twelve years old down to three, would be few less than a hundred between them—directly addressed by the apostle in these epistles. But, if they were only half-a-dozen, our argument remains equally valid.

Paul, moreover, was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in whose ancient churches children of nine days old were constituted members as really as their parents. And if the children at Ephesus and Colosse were of sufficient understanding to know what he meant, by 'obeying their parents in all things,' because it was 'well pleasing to the Lord;' there would be nothing incompatible with propriety in addressing them personally or as a class. He wrote nothing recondite, intricate, or difficult of apprehension to them; and, yet, it was all that was requisite, and all that a candid opponent will demand. But, as a child of two or three years old would be capable of comprehending the substance of the admonition, we have a right to conclude, that such were disciples, and, if disciples, then, doubtless, they had been previously baptized into the general churches of Christ. God anciently commanded children to 'honour their fathers

‘and mothers.’ Ex. xx. 12. This precept must have applied to little ones as well as to grown-up sons and daughters; unless it can be shown, that children, under a certain age, might fail to reverence their parents. These little Jews were in the church of old, and as such were addressed, and would be made to understand the purport of the law when in a state of infancy, that is, even under three years of age. The children at Ephesus and Colosse, after being baptized, evidently came under the ministerial jurisdiction of the great Apostle of the gentiles.

We naturally infer, that fathers, masters, and servants were, or might have been, in the general church at Ephesus; that wives, husbands, parents, masters, and servants were, or might have been, in the general church at Colosse; and that immoral, troublesome, and inconsistent persons were in the churches at Corinth and Galatia, because the divine writer specially and directly addressed such persons—as regular, and not as casual, attendants. On the same ground, we conclude, that children were also members of the former congregations, because he distinctly addressed such little ones as being among them. Or, if this assumption be not positive, it is clear, that children might have been there as well as their parents; for Paul supposes them to be equally present, and entitled alike to be there, when his epistles were read. And, being present, as really as wives and servants, and forming a part of the regular congregation, equally with the adults, they had undoubtedly been baptized. In like manner John the Evangelist, addresses ‘little children, young men, and fathers.’ 2 Epist. ii. 12, 13. These little folks are not here distinguished by character or attainments, but by age, and were readily recognized as different from young men. In a letter addressed to a company or committee of gentlemen, suggesting advice on some special matter, we should say nothing directly to their wives, their servants, or their children, on the supposition that they were not present to hear our admonitions, nor concerned in obeying them. Or, were we to send a letter to an assembly of women, we should not directly address men. On a similar assumption, we should speak to the persons supposed to be present, when our epistle was to be read. On this common-sense rule, the apostle evidently acted, and addressed children, as forming a part of the regular congregations in Colosse and Ephesus.

Mr. Stovel, after quoting Clement’s epistle to the Corinthians, wherein he says, ‘Let your children partake of the discipline

‘that is in Christ,’ subjoins, ‘This was the business of a ‘disciple, and because he had this to learn, he was called a ‘disciple.’ p. 329. The age of these children is not stated; they might be very young; that they were not adults, is very manifest. That they had been baptized is also admitted, for Mr. Stovel elsewhere remarks, ‘None were called disciples ‘without their being baptized, and all the baptized had, ‘without discrimination, the equal privilege of brethren in ‘that society. p. 207. Again, he says, ‘The only badge of ‘discipleship a believer is commanded to receive, is that of ‘baptism.’ p. 221. Further, ‘Disciple the persons: baptizing them, is added, because no disciple was to be ‘recognized in any other way; but the disciple must have ‘an existence before he can be recognized.’ p. 230. Of course, he must! If I am not much out in my inferences, Mr. Stovel here admits, that children, under the paternal care, were baptized and made disciples, and in the congregation at Corinth, in the time of Clement, who is regarded as a fellow-labourer with Peter and Paul! I do not see what other conclusion I can fairly draw from his combined observations.

OBSERVATION II.—*That Infant Baptism is of God, may be safely inferred from its simple, instructive, and beneficial character.*—That it was so among the Hebrews in the sea, in the wilderness, in Canaan, and among the early Christians, we shall now take for granted. That its influence, when rightly understood and administered, must be innoxious, producing no unrighteous, erroneous, or injurious results, we have shown before. I now assert, further, that it is calculated to be of great benefit to parents, to children, and to our congregations generally. The appearance of parents in the house of God, or even in their own dwellings, with their young immortals in their arms, for the purpose of presenting and consecrating them to the blessed Trinity, in this holy ordinance, is ever a pleasing and imposing sight, to most unprejudiced Christian people, and fully in keeping with the spirit of our holy religion. It reminds us of Hannah, leading her little son Samuel to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and lending him to the Lord; and of the virgin Mary, presenting the infant Redeemer before God the Father, in his sacred temple. Yet, for all that, many Baptists, who could listen to almost any rough language, or stand to witness some cruel deed, hurry out of the sanctuary, when an infant is to be dedicated to Christ in baptism, as if the roof was ready to tumble down upon them, or the ground to open and swallow up the people,

as it did Korah and his company ; or, as if some monstrous deed was to be done, outraging all decency, violating most dreadfully the laws of God, or, as if, at least, it were an act of the grossest or wickedest superstition !

Though we sometimes meet with cases in which the parents are influenced merely by the force of custom, understanding little of the precise nature of the act they are performing, or no better than they often do the purport of the worship in which they occasionally unite on the Lord's day ; or than many Hebrew parents did of the spiritual nature of circumcision ; or than many mothers do of the 'churching' they solicit of the Baptist minister after child-birth ; or than many adults do of the real meaning of the dipping they are about to undergo ; yet, they place themselves in a position to hear the designs of this sacrament explained, and its duties enforced. The good minister of Jesus Christ, fails not to show them how to train up their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to whom they are then devoted in baptism, and their high obligation to do it. He points out to them those portions of divine truth, which admonish parents to fulfil their task with prayerfulness, piety of example, and to persevere in their Christian endeavours. He embraces the opportunity of preaching Jesus Christ to them, the necessity of repentance, faith, and holiness of life in themselves, in order to be able consistently to guide their children in the way to heaven. And it is often such an opportunity as he may possibly secure on no other occasion ; and sometimes it has been blessed to the conversion of the parents themselves. Indeed, the most unfavourable view one can take of the case, is parallel to inducing ignorant and unconverted people to attend the preaching of the gospel, in order that they may learn their spiritual state, repent and consecrate themselves to Christ—deeds daily attempted by all our holy and zealous opponents.

While a few persons, comparatively, bring their children to be baptized, merely because it is done by others ; most fathers and mothers are aware that, in this act, they are dedicating their children to God ; and many of them attend with hearts full of love to their little ones, devoutly devoting them to the Saviour. These, and, in fact, all parents, are then encouraged to attend well to the Scriptural interests of their charge, from the promises of Scripture made to such as fulfil aright their obligations to their children and to God. They are also forewarned, that a neglect of their home duties, or a careless or prayerless performance of them, will most likely end in the



profligacy of their children, and in the wretchedness of their own hearts. In truth, Infant Baptism, when devoutly and Scripturally conducted, is a very profitable and interesting service, particularly to the parents and relatives present. It would certainly be a serious loss in our churches, and a sad void, amidst the ordinances of religious instruction, and sacred impressions, where this means of grace to be abolished among us; more particularly so, as we have no other instituted ceremonial to supply its place, equally adapted for usefulness and parental admonition.

This service is also symbolically instructive to all present on a baptismal occasion among nonconforming Pedobaptists. In this ordinance there is not only, as in adult baptism, an implied declaration of the fact, that all unconverted men and women are, by nature and practice, in a state of moral pollution, and, consequently, need the renewing and sanctification of the Holy Spirit; but, also, the still further and more instructive and impressive lesson, that even infants, who have never practically transgressed the laws of Heaven, require the regenerating and purifying grace of the Holy Spirit, to meeten them for glory, if they die in childhood; and to qualify them for the duties of our blessed and holy religion, if they continue many years in this wicked world. The baptism of a man or of a woman, may, it is true, be made a solemn and interesting ceremony. But that of a child is vastly more instructive. The doctrine of original depravity must certainly be recognized in the conduct of ungodly men; while it might not be in the character of a little child. All must admit, that adults are sinful; but Infant Baptism teaches, that even young children also are naturally and sadly depraved.

Unquestionably, this rite, like the Lord's supper, and like all the sacred ceremonies of old, was designed to teach some great and important truth, if not verbally, yet, symbolically and ocularly; and the more effectively the ordinance teaches that truth, the more likely it is to have been from Heaven, and according to the revealed will of God. That sinful adults should require the regenerating grace of the gospel, is a truth the merest novice in divinity would not dispute; and with the symbolical pouring of purifying water, on their heads, he would not be much surprised. But, to be a witness of the same ceremony, when an infant was the subject, could not fail profitably to instruct a thoughtful inquirer, and to lead the young, in after life, to ask, what meant ye by these things? Hence, it is inferred, that, as a teaching service, which it

certainly was intended to be, as well as one of consecration to God, Infant Baptism, like Infant Circumcision, is far superior to the baptism of an adult, and was, doubtless, designed to become universal and continuous in the churches; while, as a consequence, adult baptism, like adult circumcision, was designed to come to an end, whenever the gospel was generally spread in the world. It is probable, an adult lineal descendant of Abraham has not been circumcised during the last three thousand years.

The baptismal dedication of children to God, is also calculated to operate beneficially on their own hearts and lives in after years. Our opponents enlarge, with considerable energy and eloquence, on the pernicious tendencies of Infant Baptism; contending, that they are powerfully and perniciously affected by it in after life. 'Since,' says Mr. Noel, 'you are equally 'without both precept and precedent for the baptism of 'infants, rescue them also from the disadvantages of an 'unauthorized and deceptive rite, which, by making them 'Christians in name, may hinder them from being Christians 'in reality.' p. 89. If these earnest adversaries of Infant Baptism mean, that, when administered unscripturally, and associated with antichristian and soul-deluding doctrines—like all other false and heretical teachings in Baptist or other pulpits—it is injurious to the baptized, we readily concede the fact, and deplore it as much as Mr. Noel, or any of his godly brethren. But, it does not follow, that, because some people abuse this sacrament, as they do almost everything else, and wrest many Scriptures of truth to their own destruction, it cannot be administered harmlessly and beneficially. I recur to this allegation of our opposing brethren, however, to show, that, in their opinion, what is done to children in baptism, may greatly affect them, when arrived at the age of reflection—a doctrine which, when it serves their purpose, they repudiate as invalid and frivolous; asking us, with an air of exultation, What good can baptism do to a baby who knows nothing about the service, and who, at the time, 'is as 'unconscious as a stone?' For, surely, if an act, done to an infant, may be of great mental, moral, or religious disadvantage to it; another act may do it great and essential service. At all events, its youth or unconsciousness would not prevent the result in the one case more than in the other!

When children, in subsequent years, are duly informed, that their parents prayerfully and piously consecrated them to the Lord, through baptism, in the beginning of their days;

that they were then devoted to Christ; placed under his wing; introduced to the teachings and governance of the people of God, and, as far as possible, were bound and pledged to believe, love, and serve the Lord; the fair and legitimate result will be, a desire to act in accordance with their early consecration, and to observe those holy and gracious laws which were inculcated upon them subsequently to its administration. To do otherwise, would be adverse to the only obligations which should bind and govern them—just as it would have been grossly inconsistent with the obligation of a Jew, circumcised in its infancy to Jehovah, to have run after idols in manhood; or, as for the son of Baptist parents, dedicated to God in childhood, to turn Jew or Mahometan, when grown to the age of an adult.

There is much import and force in the passage, ‘Train up a child’ [even from the cradle] ‘in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. There are numerous cases, unhappily, in which no more apparent good arises from this rite, however piously and correctly administered, than formerly arose from circumcision, or from the baptism of the young Hebrews in the Red Sea, or than now follows the formal dedication of Baptist children to God without the use of water, or from the solemn immersion of thousands of adults. But, on all sides, the reasonable anticipation is, that good to the young will be the result, as they grow up; and, that they will, for themselves, seek and serve that Saviour, to whom they were early devoted by their beloved parents.

The objection Mr. Noel brings against Infant Baptism—that it was calculated to make them assume themselves to be Christians indeed, when they were only Christians by dedication; will equally apply to the declarations of our Lord, concerning certain infants of old, That of such is the kingdom of God. If they were said to be of the kingdom of heaven; if the Son of God makes so much of children, and regards them as members of his church; or even, that *such* as themselves, in meekness and docility, were worthy subjects of his kingdom; might not this hinder them, in after life, from seeking to become wiser and better; and prove of great disadvantage to them? Surely, nothing respecting their character or security is pronounced by the Protestant Dissenting Minister in their baptism more gratifying to the young and opening mind, than Christ uttered, when he took children in his arms and blessed them! Christ, doubt-

less, had his design in manifesting so publicly his deep interest in infants and little children. He not only intended to teach his disciples and friends what manner of persons they ought to be ; but also to interest them in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation. But, surely, he said nothing to delude the hearts of children as they grew up to manhood !

Mr. Burkitt remarks, ' Can any wise or good man believe, ' that our Saviour would speak such favorable words of infants, ' and his outward gesture manifest so much good-will towards ' them, only with an intent to ensnare and deceive us ? ' Doubtless, it was to encourage his ministers to perform all ' charitable offices towards them.' Certainly, he did not intend to inflate them with a false conceit of their self-importance when, in after years, they heard of the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth concerning them ! While Mr. Tombes denies ' That the kingdom of heaven pertains to ' all infants of believers ; ' he thinks it does ' to them whom ' Christ then blessed.' *Exer.* p. 19. Consequently, those children, at least, were in as great danger of being ' inflated ' with false conceits ' as any that John or Paul might have baptized with water. Was Christ doing mischief on a small scale ?

The baptized Hebrews (not excepting their infant seed) were, according to Mr. Stovel, bound to obey, love, and serve God, because of their baptism in the Red Sea. So, on the same principle, we may assume, that all baptized children now are equally and especially bound to obey, love, and serve Jesus Christ. If they break their baptismal covenant, or the laws it imposes on them ; they, like the rebellious Israelites, both old and young in the wilderness, will suffer for it. To object, that a ceremony of which children, at the time, can understand nothing, and to which they can give no intelligent assent, cannot beneficially influence them in subsequent years, amounts to little, unless it be at the same time proved, that the circumcision of the juvenile Israelites, the baptism of the little Hebrews in the Red Sea, and the dedication of baby-baptists in the chapel vestry, were destitute of any tendency to benefit these infants, even in the smallest degree. If it be asked, in what way is a child to be benefitted in subsequent life, by an act of which it was unconscions at the time of its performance ? I reply, that its original ignorance is to be compensated by subsequent information and enlightenment.

The children present, when Israel crossed the Jordan, in their way to Canaan, were ignorant of the purpose of God in



ordering twelve stones to be set up at Gilgal. But, 'Joshua spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over Jordan on dry land.' Josh. iv. 21, 22. In the same way, parents should tell their children, in time to come, that they were baptized, and what were the purport and duties involved in this dedicatory service. Infant Baptism, it is true, leaves no cognizable impression on the child's person, to call to remembrance its early dedication to God; but the like may be said of adult dipping. 'That immersion leaves no permanent corporal mark,' says Mr. Hall, 'our senses assure us.' p. 249. The external physical effects are equally wanting or evanescent in the case of dipping as of sprinkling—unless, as unhappily sometimes occurs, the immersed man or woman contract a cold, or something worse, by the dangerous operation.

No child knows who are its own parents by instinct; and without recognizing them as parents, it would never love nor obey them in the Lord, nor at all. But, being informed, in after years, whose offspring it really is, filial affection and obedience become the natural and spontaneous result. The circumcised Hebrew could not have known that, by this deed, he was devoted to the true God, unless, when of age to understand the fact, he was made acquainted with it. For aught he could discover from himself, he might have been circumcised to some false deity, whose votaries circumcised their male children the same as did the descendants of the Patriarch Jacob. It is stated by Godwyn, that circumcision was practised by the Ethiopians, Egyptians, Colchians, and Turks, as well as the Jews. *B. 6.* To the religion of which of these nations the children were devoted by this rite, they all required information in advanced years; and naturally they would zealously cleave to that, and to that only. So, children and young people, informed that they were baptized or disciplined unto Christ, in their infancy, by beloved parents, may be as much influenced by the communication, as though they had originally been well informed of, and consenting parties to, the rite itself. And, no doubt, they are often as much affected by it, as numerous adults are by the remembrance of their own immersion. Many people are equally disposed to abide by the virtuous obligations their parents have laid them under, as they are to fulfil those under which they have knowingly and willingly laid themselves—and, very often, more so.

SECTION SEVENTH.—*The personal and relative effects of baptism are not to be magnified beyond the statements of the Word of God.*—This has often been done, and occasionally, too, with the best intentions. Some good people tell us, that none are either prepared for, or were worthy of, this rite, till they have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, have heartily repented of their sins, and have shown, by long or effectual probationary trials, that they are the spiritual children of God. This, as we have seen, does not comport with the requirements or examples of the sacred volume. Others also ascribe such marvellous results to this sacramental act, especially if performed by genuine priestly hands, as to magnify the service into all but a saving ordinance. Mr. Daniell says, ‘Infant sprinkling tells us a sinner is born—believers’ baptism tells us a sinner is born again.’ p. 25. The latter not truly and always so, Mr. Daniell! Mr. Noel adds, ‘To witness the baptism of a believer, must be useful to the members of the church. Another soul is rescued by Almighty grace from perdition, and the church may share with angels in their joy over a repentant sinner!’ p. 276. Alas! most of his brethren, if they read the fore-cited statistics of the Baptist body, must rejoice with trembling!

Neither of these notions did the apostles of Christ either teach or believe. With them, baptism was of very secondary interest to the preaching of the gospel. Though they sometimes baptized their converts with their own hands, they tell us, that it was not for this purpose, as a primary object, they were sent on their mission to all nations; but rather, to proselyte souls to Christ—a proof they did not believe in baptismal regeneration! Inferior agents were generally employed to administer this ceremony, even in their own presence. Peter evidently did not baptize Cornelius and his family, but commanded some of his attendants to do it. It is a singular circumstance, that, after the day of pentecost, only two of our Lord’s twelve apostles are mentioned as having baptized their converts, or commanded others to do it for them. These were Peter and Paul—Peter, the family at Cæsarea, just mentioned; and Paul, certain persons at Corinth, with Lydia and the Jailor and their families at Philippi. That the other apostles baptized their converts, we doubt not; but we are favoured with no record of the fact. And though many ten thousands in the apostolic age, and subsequently to the memorable day of pentecost, underwent this ceremony, we seldom read any narratives or notices of it.

We have already proved, that baptism does not require spiritual conversion beforehand, nor ever insure it as a consequence. It simply places its subjects, of whatever age, in the position of candidates for still higher advantages and influences for the time to come. Persons baptized unto Moses, were not thereby meetened for the office of priest or Levite. These posts were subsequently filled on other considerations, or through other qualifications, than those imparted by baptism. Even partaking of the passover was not based on baptism to Moses; but, on a prior institution, covenant, or command, which would have equally secured to the emancipated Hebrews this commemorative and foreshadowing ceremony, had they not been baptized at all. Other blessings were secured to Israel through circumcision, and with their lawful right to these blessings, the Mosaic baptism did not interfere. The act of dedication, especially that performed in the Red Sea, guaranteed its own peculiar rights and advantages. What these were, has been repeatedly stated.

So, in respect of Christian baptism, under the gospel dispensation; the subjects of it are not thereby and necessarily entitled to every boon and promise of the gospel of Christ. Before all these can be fully self-appropriated and enjoyed, another and a higher baptism—that of the Holy Ghost—must be received. Water-baptism constitutes them disciples, places them in the school of Christianity, and entitles them to pastoral supervision and care. In the Saviour's commission, it is connected directly and only with teaching the baptized what he communicated to the apostles. It does not empower them to preach the gospel, or to become full members of duly organized, select, and independent Christian churches, or to partake of the Lord's Supper, or to join the special communion of the saints, or to exercise power in managing the affairs of spiritual associations. It is a step in the right direction; as learning in a sabbath school has been the road to the pulpit; or, as mastering the alphabet has been the commencement of a course that ended in the Professor's chair, or on the Lord Chancellor's wool-sack. Before a baptized person, of any age, can preach or teach, or have a vote or voice in the select society of the saints, or receive the Christian passover, in purely Christian societies, certain intellectual and religious attainments must be made, admission solicited, and election, by the brethren, secured. And this holds as true among many of our Baptist friends as among congregational Pedobaptists. In some cases of old,

the interval between baptism and communion might have been brief; but, still, the former might have been received, and not the latter. Occasionally personal baptism and preaching, in the apostolic age, might have been almost chronologically identical; yet, there was no more necessary connexion between them, than between baptism and martyrdom. In truth, the connexion, in the latter instance, was often more intimate, we have reasons for believing, than in the former.

The idea of baptizing into a particular communion, conferring on the subjects of it a right to full membership, and a seat at the Lord's table, with co-authority in the affairs of the society, is not warranted by any deed or doctrine found in the Word of God; and I believe, is not now generally contended for, even by some of the warmest advocates of adult or believers' baptism. It is mostly held, that the baptism rests with the minister, and the admission to membership with the pre-existing fellowship. As far as we can learn, from the Scripture narratives, the apostles and their preaching coadjutors laboured chiefly to win men over to a belief in Christ as the true Messiah; to understand the leading doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel, and practically to keep the laws of God; and that, subsequently, the people formed or organized themselves into societies, fellowships, communions, or churches, in which the ordinances of worship were conducted, and the sacraments were duly administered—probably, in a great measure after the model of the synagogue—receiving, of course, such hints and advice from their instructors, as the cases seemed to require. The apostles appear to have provided the elements for a duly organized church, but seldom or never actually to have put them together. Titus was left in Crete to assist in organizing the spiritual materials Paul had provided to his hand. Hence, what we call church-power under God, originated with, was vested in, and exercised by, the constituent members of the respective localities. Indeed, no other course was practicable. This also is the principle on which our opponents and ourselves usually proceed in this country and age.

It is felt, that if baptism and membership were inseparably connected, the church might be improperly placed under the absolute dominion of the pastor, unless his power of baptizing were limited, or taken out of his hands. To be able to nominate all the members of the senate, would be to possess and exercise despotic national authority. If, at the commencement of the apostles' labours, which were most signally



successful, the people who were baptized and then immediately added to the church; it must have been into the general body of Christian professors, as opposed to, or distinguished from, the Jews and heathens, and not into select communions of regenerated believers in Christ; for such holy and particular societies were not then duly formed—these being the result of arrangements in after times. They were baptized unto Christ, or in his name, and were simply purified and devoted to Christianity, to believe its doctrines, and to comply with its rules—were ‘added unto them,’ the apostles and their previous adherents. To be baptized unto Christ, was to be baptized unto a belief in Christ, as the true Messiah; and to be baptized into his death, was to be baptized to a reception and acknowledgment of his glorious atonement for sin, and nothing more.

To attach greater results than these to water-baptism, is to make it a regenerating and saving ordinance, and to teach the fearful notion, that eternal life is made dependent on a ceremony performed or withheld, at pleasure, by poor fallible, prejudiced, and sinful, mortals. If there be a practicable middle course, our opponents have failed to point it out; nor have we sufficient penetration to discover it. As previously shown, certain parties have laboured to find out some intermediate result of this baptismal ordinance; but, it is generally agreed, that they have signally and even miserably failed. Still, while some persons would not, for a moment, suggest, that salvation depended on this rite; they contend, that there are certain social and religious privileges, of the highest order, immediately consequent upon it. They argue, that baptism and full communion are for the same persons, and that, in the post-apostolic churches, at least, this doctrine was generally recognized. They make the following objections to our views on this head—

OBJECTION I.—*That the qualifications for baptism were the same as those required for the Lord's Supper.*—This opinion is professedly based on the following expressions: ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’ Mark xvi. 16. ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you . . . And they that gladly received the word were baptized.’ Acts ii. 38, 41. It is contended, that these qualifications are as sufficient for receiving the Lord's Supper as for being baptized; and that, as children cannot believe, repent, or gladly receive the word, they should neither be baptized nor partake of the Eucharist. ‘Infant communion,’ says Mr. Gibbs, ‘ought certainly to be observed in every church that admits of Infant Baptism; for

'are not the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper 'commanded by the same authority—are they not of the same 'religious importance?' p. 27. He might, however, as truly have said, 'Baptism, the Lord's Supper, *and* preaching the 'gospel, are commanded by the same authority, and are of the 'same religious importance, and that those who are baptized 'should officiate in the pulpit! Mr. Noel says, 'If the adult 'is qualified for baptism, he is qualified for the Lord's Supper; 'and if he is disqualified for the Lord's Supper, he is 'disqualified for baptism. The qualifications for each ordinance 'are the same.' p. 129. It is certain the last cited passages of Scripture do not connect repentance, receiving the word, belief, or salvation, with the Lord's Supper; for the latter is not mentioned at all in them. Carson states the case correctly: 'The person who is admitted to one ordinance of 'a church, is admitted to all, *if* there be no limitation,' [expressed or implied—arising from circumstances, or from personal incapacity.] p. 233.

It is clear, however, that the above passage from Mark must mean the baptism of the Holy Ghost; if not, by proving too much, it evidently proves nothing to the purpose of our opponents' argument. Let them regard it as water-baptism, and then tell us, how they can escape the doctrine of baptismal salvation? To evade the dilemma in which this text involves our opponents, some of them concede, that it has no reference to children at all; and, consequently, no more opposes their baptism, than their admission into heaven. The other passage from the Acts, with similar ones which might be cited, does not represent the characters to which it refers, as necessarily and unquestionably converted to the Lord, in their hearts and by divine grace. It simply speaks of a change of mind, of a belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and that the converts to this doctrine were glad to hear of his being the Saviour of the world. These good beginnings might ultimately end in the Lord's Supper, the pastoral office, and eternal salvation. But of this we feel assured, that, were persons, previously Jews, heathens, idolaters, or infidels—excited and impressed, for the first time, by powerful appeals to their consciences—to apply to any evangelical Baptist minister for immediate immersion and full church-fellowship; assuring him, that they had altered their minds, as to the Messiahship of Christ, whom they now believed to be the Saviour of the world; were sorry for past offences, and were glad to hear the gospel preached; he would, most certainly, demand further proof of

their real conversion and spiritual renovation, than these avowals afforded him, before inducting them to the communion of saints, or, probably, immersing them in his baptism. This certainly would be the case, if he felt any desire to preserve purity of communion, harmony of fellowship, and steadfast cordial co-operation, in promoting the genuine religion of the Gospel—at least, if past experience guided his future proceedings. And, as in this case, he professes to follow the precepts and practice of the first Christian ministers, of course, he believes they observed the same rules by which his own proceedings are now scrupulously guided.

It is manifest, that the first candidates for baptism, as administered by John, were destitute of the moral and spiritual prerequisites for the inner-church membership; while they evidently were qualified for water-baptism. 'I baptize you with water, *unto* repentance.' Matt. iii. 11. 'John did baptize in the wilderness, and did preach the baptism of repentance *for* the remission of sins.' Mark i. 4. 'John did preach the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.' Acts xiii. 24. 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance.' Acts xix. 4. Here were people baptized, in order that they might repent and reform, or unto the doctrine of repentance and reformation. Now, unless some marvellous and saving influence certainly and invariably attended John's baptism, they were no more fitted for Christian communion, as the immediate result of their baptism, than before they were baptized; and when, as yet, they had not repented, or been religiously reformed.

Mr. Hall observes, 'The evangelists, Mark and Luke, it is true, affirm that John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; whence we are entitled to infer, that the rite which he administered, when accompanied with suitable dispositions, was important in the order of preparation, not that it was accompanied with the immediate or actual collation of the benefit.' p. 29. It is nowhere said, or even intimated, that any of the people whom John baptized, did actually repent of their sins, especially 'after a godly sort.' Had he professedly baptized them as genuine penitents and truly converted Christians, he would have sadly deluded them, and fostered in their hearts vain and groundless hopes; as much so as our opponents do by baptizing thousands every year, and directly admitting them to the Lord's table, without their possessing any real heartfelt godliness—and then excommunicating them for immoral or unchristian conduct!

Mosheim says, 'In the earliest times of the church, all who 'professed firmly to believe that Jesus was the only Redeemer 'of the world, and who, in consequence of this profession, 'promised to live in a manner conformable to the purity of 'his holy religion, were immediately received among the 'disciples of Christ. This was all the preparation for baptism 'then required; and a more accurate instruction in the doctrine 'of Christianity was to be administered to them, after their 'receiving that sacrament.' *Ecc. Hist. Cent. i. p. ii. c. 3.*

It is certain that the baptisms of John and of the Apostles (whose subjects and modes are admitted to have been perfectly analogous) were not administered professedly to those only whose sins had been remitted, and who were to receive this ordinance as a sign or seal that they were freed from condemnation; but, simply, as an introduction to a probationary state of discipline, through which they might ultimately enter into the particular communion of saints. 'Repent,' says Peter, 'for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Acts ii. 38. Were these people, before their baptism, as meet for the Lord's Supper as for this symbolical purification? Many in the *Ecclesiae*, or congregations of Corinth and Galatia, were guilty of great irregularities and misconduct, contrary to the precepts of Paul concerning the purity of Christian fellowship. But, doubtless, the members of their inner fellowship would never have thought of admitting to their especial communion persons who manifestly had yet to repent of their sins, and to receive the gifts or graces of the Holy Ghost. At all events, they would never have done so, had they paid a due regard to his admonitions respecting the holiness becoming the household of God. And, surely, we are not now to make the admitted errors and misconduct of the early converts to Christianity the rule of our judgment and the guide of our religious procedure! The laws of Christ's house, and not the doings of his ignorant domestics, are to be our spiritual directory!

It is plain, that people in their sins, not yet forgiven, not yet brought under divine influence, might be baptized; but were they, while in this state, qualified for sitting down at the Lord's table? and would any Particular Baptist Church, knowingly or willingly, receive into their fellowship such as were baptized by John and the apostles of Christ? Certainly not. According to the discipline of the Baptist churches in our land and age, there evidently is no continuous connexion between baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thousands of people



are dipped yearly, who are thrust out of spiritual fellowship by our opponents, and then regarded as heathen men and publicans. Their dipping, at first, generally introduced them to their inner society; but, their subsequent misconduct or heretical notions totally expelled them. They were qualified for baptism, and that for life, but not for continued membership. Therefore, according to the procedure of our antagonists, persons may be fit for the ordinance of baptism, and receive it most canonically, and not for that of the Lord's Supper, from which they are justly excluded. In fact, they advocate a theory, in their works, written to oppose Infant Baptism, which they necessarily repudiate every day in their denominational proceedings.

We are again urgently reminded, that John's disciples *Confessed* their sins, and consequently were as suitable subjects for the Lord's Supper as for baptism—though the sacred writers say nothing of the kind. We must, therefore, again reply, that the consequence does not necessarily follow. Balaam, Saul, and Judas, made as full and as penitent a confession of their sins as any that John baptized at the Jordan; and yet, they were not such characters as our Baptist friends would admit to the Eucharist—in the communicants of which faith, love, gratitude, and holiness of heart and life are expected. Mr. Hall, speaking of the baptized disciples of John, says, 'The number of his converts appears to have 'been almost national,' p. 26, and they 'all but uniformly 'rejected Christ.' p. 160. Were these people, though qualified for baptism, and baptized unto the coming Messiah, fit members for Particular Churches? Though 'prodigious 'multitudes' had been baptized by John and our Lord's disciples, the Saviour styles his true followers a 'little flock,' to whom the Father would give the kingdom. Were they not the baptized mob, who cried out 'Crucify him, crucify him'—for who besides were there to cry out at all? That most of this clamorous and wicked multitude had been baptized by our Saviour's harbinger and his own personal attendants, admits of little doubt. His enemies then, as well as now, were, in a certain sense, 'they of his own household.' 'His own received him not,' but rejected him. They were disappointed in their false and visionary expectation of the Saviour; and now they invoked the vengeance of the law on their supposed deceiver.

It is also worthy of notice, that those who oppose Infant Baptism, and profess to follow only Scripture precedents, do

not avowedly baptize *unto* repentance, but after it; not *for* the remission of sins, but after it; not *to* receive the Holy Ghost, but after receiving him; not *unto* Christ, but after being in Christ by faith and love. The correct statement of Baptist principles and practice requires the use of language totally different from that employed by the inspired writers in the New Testament. It may, further, be worth observing, that of all the vast multitudes baptized in the sea, none but those who underwent the ceremony in infancy, and up to twenty years of age, with two exceptions, ultimately entered the Holy Land; that of all the infants and children baptized now, none, at the time, are practical disbelievers, sinners, profligates, or hypocrites; that all the persons circumcised under the law, in the regular way, were little innocent babes; and that of all who were baptized by John and our Lord's disciples, and afterwards turned against Christ, and promoted his crucifixion, the children dedicated to the Messiah, as coming or as having arrived in our world, took no part in this iniquitous procedure. They were too young for that. All their recorded doings consisted in singing 'Hosanna to the 'Son of David, who cometh in the name of the Lord.' His murderers were those who had been baptized as adult believers!

It is insisted, that all persons baptized by the apostles BELIEVED, and that, therefore, belief is now essential to the reception of this rite. This we admit, in respect of independent adults. But we again assert, that, even in their case, there is no proof that it was any thing beyond a belief in the fact, that Christ was the promised Messiah—leaving the qualifications of infants quite out of the question. A clever *Anonymous* writer, after reviewing every text relating to baptism, arrives at the like conclusion; and whose words I will cite, in confirmation of my own judgment in the matter. 'Thus I 'have carefully and impartially examined all the accounts I 'can meet with in the history of the acts of the apostles, of any 'persons being converted to the Christian faith; and, I believe, 'upon the nicest scrutiny, it will appear, that all the faith to 'which they were converted, and by which they were entitled 'to the name of believers, and to an admission into the 'Christian Church' [or community] 'by baptism, was no 'more than a conviction of the divine authority of the Lord 'Jesus; this is what the apostles preached, what their hearers 'believed, and into this they were baptized....As there is no 'instance then to be produced where any thing more than a 'belief in the divine authority of Christ is required, as necessary

‘to an admission into his church,’ [or congregation,] ‘it is evident, I think, that this faith alone is a sufficient qualification for Christian Baptism. Had there been but one precedent of this kind which had no peculiar circumstance attending it, I know not why it would not have justified the admission of others upon the same terms in all similar cases. How much more must the concurrence of all the instances of conversions which we have any account of, in which there is no more than such a faith inculcated or demanded, be a demonstrative proof of its being not merely sufficient for, but of its giving an absolute title to, baptism. For, if a belief in the divine mission of Christ was not a proper qualification for an admission into his church’ [or congregation], ‘the apostles must be extremely faulty in their requiring nothing further. But, if they who were enlightened and directed by the Holy Spirit of God, in a distinguishing manner, allowed its sufficiency for the end, it must be very great arrogance in others to demand any thing further.’

It is again said, that John’s preaching was *Discriminating*; and the like will apply to that of Christ and his apostles. It is then inferred, that the primitive baptisms were so discriminating, that only persons who deeply repented of their sins, heartily believed the doctrines taught, and avowed a determination to conform to all the revealed will of God, underwent this ceremony. To this objection Dr. Halley forcibly replies: ‘The preaching of John was faithful, discriminating, searching, distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. Mr. Stovel incontrovertibly proves that he reproved sin, rebuked the impenitent, and exhorted all to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. But how does all this determine the question, whether John baptized *unto* repentance or *after* repentance. Mr. Stovel might as well produce the earnest, searching, discriminating sermons of Latimer, or Baxter, or Whitfield, to prove that they would baptize no other than believers. I humbly venture to affirm that I have endeavoured, however imperfectly, to discriminate character in preaching. But I do not suppose that I shall be called a Baptist on that account. What is there in this discriminating preaching of John which an evangelical minister of the Independent denomination would not imitate as readily and cordially as the ministers of the Baptist communion? My opponent must be again reminded that our controversy is not, what was the searching character of John’s preaching, but what was the signification of John’s baptism? Was it a

‘public recognition of all the baptized as already penitent, or  
 ‘was it a symbol of the cleansing influences of that doctrine  
 ‘in which they were to be instructed?’

Nor have we any proof, that the apostles were more discriminating in their preaching, or more particular respecting the persons they baptized, than John. Our opponents, for the most part, concede this point. Mr. Noel says, ‘A disciple  
 ‘of John was one who repented of his sins, and believed that  
 ‘the promised Christ was about to appear. . . . It is improbable  
 ‘that John would baptize on lower terms than those on which  
 ‘proselytes were baptized unto Moses. If a heathen wished  
 ‘for Jewish baptism, he must renounce his idols, profess his  
 ‘belief in the divine authority of Moses, and promise obedience  
 ‘to the Mosaic laws; would John, then, baptize a Jew, unless  
 ‘he renounced his sins, and professed belief in the approaching  
 ‘advent of Christ, with his intention to keep the commands  
 ‘of God? His numerous baptisms furnish proof, that those  
 ‘who were baptized by John made a solemn profession of  
 ‘their repentance and faith.’ p. 50, 51. Now, we may fairly infer, that as far as piety, regeneration, and profession went, the disciples of John were as fully qualified for baptism as any of Paul’s converts—for they could require no more than was done at Jordan and Enon. How far they were thus qualified, we have just shown.

Mr. Morell, a baptist writer says, ‘Real conversion was  
 ‘not indispensable to constitute a disciple of Christ during  
 ‘his life and ministry.’ p. 40. Does Mr. Noel really mean, that it actually was, and that all John’s disciples were really and spiritually converted? Impossible! Dr. W. Newman says, ‘John’s baptism and Christ’s Baptism, before his death,  
 ‘were surely Christian baptism, for the time, as we say.’ p. 8. Besides, if John’s baptism were not essentially the same as that of the apostles afterwards, then our baptism is essentially different from the baptism administered to the Saviour himself, and to which latter our brethren are constantly referring us, as exhibiting what they believe to be the true subjects and mode of this ordinance. Those baptized after the Saviour’s death, might have obtained more distinct views than those baptized before; but that the apostles required a fuller confession of sin, deeper repentance, ‘stronger resolutions, or more personal  
 ‘piety,’ than John, there is not the shadow of evidence. That our evangelical Baptist brethren would not admit such persons to their communion, as John and the apostles frequently baptized, I re-affirm; and none of our opponents will deny it.



OBJECTION II.—*It is still maintained, that all who were baptized by the apostles, were at once admitted to the Lord's Supper.*—The only text brought forward to support this opinion is the following: 'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine' (or, 'in their attendance on the word the apostles preached'—*Doddridge*) 'and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple; and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Acts. ii. 42, 46. That the Lord's Supper, formally administered, is here meant, is very doubtful. Commentators are divided on the question—the preponderance being, as far as I can ascertain, in favour of its meaning only their ordinary meals, or their feasts of charity and hospitality, partaken of thankfully, devoutly, joyfully, in eating and drinking to the glory of God. To me, it is manifest, that the Lord's Supper, as our opponents understand it, is not intended. Agnostos observes—'This appears to be the only place where baptism is associated with the Lord's Supper (supposing that the breaking of bread is to be understood in relation to that ordinance). But even here, it is no less intimately connected with the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and prayers; so that if the want of baptism would exclude from the table of the Lord, it would equally exclude from those other exercises of devotion and instruction, which are represented as designating the Christian character.' p. 108.

*Doddridge* says, 'It may undoubtedly signify their common meals.' *In loc.* It is not called the Lord's Supper; but simply 'breaking of bread,' a phrase frequently employed to designate their ordinary meals. Matt. xiv. 19; xv. 36; Luke xxiv. 50. No wine is mentioned, and no memorial of Christ's death is referred to, nor is any special solemnity of manner recorded; all which seem essential to the devout administration of this sacrament. And when it is added, 'from house to house,' it appears clearly to refer to Christian hospitality, or social and friendly intercourse. Certainly, the expression, 'from house to house,' is nowhere else employed in respect of the Lord's Supper. There is nothing in the terms that would indicate 'the sacrament,' any more than when 'Gaius, mine host,' and other hospitable friends, entertained the apostles and people of Christ, in subsequent times. That the converts on the day of pentecost, and those added soon after, amounting, at least, to five thousand men (and women), did not meet together in one place to partake of the Eucharist,

may be readily assumed. The accommodation for such a multitude of communicants would be out of their reach, unless the temple were lent for the purpose by the priests, which was not more likely, than that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would allow the apostles to immerse their converts in the domestic tanks; or unless, like the Scottish covenanters, they fenced their tables in the suburban fields, exposed to the gaze, and liable to the shouts, if nothing worse, of their indignant enemies; which is equally improbable.

It is worth knowing, that the early followers of Christ had no spacious churches or chapels of their own in which to congregate and celebrate their religious services. 'The first place of meeting, among the primitive Christians, seems to have been a room in the house of some member of the church. As the congregation became larger, particularly in towns, it became necessary to select a more suitable place of assembly. The church at Ephesus held their meetings for a time in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, where Paul preached to them. Gradually, these private apartments would be fitted up in a style better adapted for public worship. An elevated seat would be introduced for the speaker, and a table set, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Separate buildings, for the special purpose of divine service, were erected so early as in the third century, at which time they are expressly mentioned in the edict of Gallien. The Chronicle of Edessa speaks of a Christian church as standing then, even in A.D. 202.' *Faiths of the World*. Hence, the congregating or communion of large numbers of believers at one time, and in one building, during the apostolic age, is very improbable.

In truth, it is not rendered certain that the sacrament was frequently or regularly administered to the baptized for a considerable time after its first appointment, by Christ himself. He gave his disciples no directions when it was to be first repeated, nor how often afterwards. It might have been reiterated annually, (like the original passover), or monthly, or weekly, by the saints in limited companies, in the houses of Christian converts; but there is no proof in support of its early observance. When, in the course of time, distinct and independent societies were formed by real Christian converts, as circumstances permitted or demanded—as when bishops or elders were appointed in particular localities, to take the oversight of the little flocks, or when infant congregations were gathered by evangelical labourers, as recorded in Acts xiv.

23, about the year 46 ; or, just as deacons were chosen when they were needed—then, it is probable, the Lord's Supper was regularly administered, at intervals more or less protracted, to the godly followers of Christ, duly admitted to this Christian feast.

Nor is a long intermission, or a considerable postponement, of this sacrament, in times of travail, tumult, and persecution, without something like a precedent. The passover was not kept, nor circumcision administered, by the Israelites, even when under the personal guidance of Moses and Aaron, during the forty years they were travelling in the wilderness. Though instituted, and commanded to be observed by them, and their seed for ever ; the former was not kept a second time, till they came to the plains of Jericho. Ex. xii. 24. Nor were the children circumcised during all their long pilgrimage in the desert. Josh. v. 2-12. Indeed, many of the ceremonial laws, which Moses enjoined upon the Jews, could not have been regularly, if ever, observed by them till they came into the corn and wine-growing land of Canaan—forty years afterwards.

Now, unless we can discover some intimate and immediate connexion between water-baptism and the Lord's Supper in the passages to which we have referred, (Acts ii. 42, 46), we shall find it no where else in the New Testament. No other case occurs in which the slightest intimation is given, that the baptized generally received this sacrament. Of course, we conclude, that the vast multitudes, baptized by John and the Saviour's disciples, prior to the crucifixion, were not inducted to this service ; for, in its direct spiritual application to Christ, as having actually died for sin, it had not been instituted—though the original passover, of which it formed a part, was regularly observed during all the time. The baptized Samaritans are not said to have received the Lord's Supper ; nor Cornelius ; nor Paulus Sergius, (Peter and Paul's first converts among the gentiles) ; nor Lydia ; nor Crispus ; nor Gaius ; nor Stephanus ; nor Paul ; nor the Jailor ; nor the Eunuch ; nor, in fact, any other persons, immediately after their baptism, or in consequence of its reception, and some of them not for months or years afterwards. The fact of its administration at Corinth is clearly stated ; but this was in the year of our Lord, 60 ; and at Troas, its celebration is probable ; but this was in the year 57—periods considerably remote from the time of its institution.

I am not asserting that a very long time did certainly elapse during which this holy ordinance—like the passover

and circumcision in the wilderness—was suspended. But, I do contend, that the opponents of Infant Baptism must not be permitted to found an argument against that rite, on the gratuitous assumption of an early, intimate, and uninterrupted connexion, between the two sacraments, in the case of all baptized Christians—which connexion, according to the sacred records, was never designed, nor ever observed. With respect to the apostle Paul, it is probable, that the nature and purport of this ordinance were unknown to him till he received a direct revelation concerning them, from Jesus Christ himself, very likely some years after his conversion and baptism; 1 Cor. xi. 23. ‘For I have received of the Lord that which ‘I have delivered unto you,’ [when I was with you three years ago]. In none of his recorded discourses, or his epistles, besides the above, is this sacrament ever specifically mentioned. Mr. A. Fuller says, ‘I do not recollect, that any minister is ‘said to have administered the Lord’s Supper, unless we ‘consider Christ as sustaining that character, at the time of ‘its institution; and this silence of the Scriptures, concerning ‘the administrator, appeared to me to prove that it was a matter ‘of indifference.’ Mr. Kinghorn also admits, that ‘the New ‘Testament does not prohibit the unbaptized from receiving ‘the Lord’s Supper, because no circumstance arose which ‘rendered such prohibition necessary.’ p. 32. A similar silence, for many years, as to its administration at all, equally proves, that there was no necessary connexion between this ordinance and water-baptism; the latter of which was confessedly administered to all new converts to the Gospel.

But, supposing adult baptism and the Lord’s Supper were scripturally related; it does not necessarily follow, that there might not be Infant Baptism without any such immediate connexion between that act and a partaking of the Eucharist. Between circumcision and immediate active obedience, in the case of adults, the law enjoined a close connexion; but not so between the circumcision of infants and the like immediate obedience. The baptized adult proselyte was bound to serve God openly and actively at once; but his baptized baby, from its natural incapacity, was under no such present obligation—though the exception is not noticed. God does not reap where he has not sown. And all his general rules admit of necessary exceptions. The Hebrews, baptized in the Sea, were bound immediately to attend to the instruction of Moses as their inspired teacher; but the young child was not bound to be, there and then, an attentive student



in the school of the law. Baptist parents dedicate and devote their infants to the care, service, and blessings of God, before the latter can have a thought on the subject, or perform the least labour for the Lord. Persons may be in the same state, but not in the like circumstances; may be in the same relation to the church, but not in the like position as to active duty. A child may be an heir to a fortune it cannot personally hold, to food it cannot eat, to raiment it cannot wear, and to homage it cannot knowingly receive. All this is too manifest to be unperceived, and too conclusive to be controverted. On the same grounds, we conclude, that if Baptism and the Lord's Supper were consecutive and allied; the interval between the reception of them might be many years—as there are between the little school-boy, and the competent school-master. To argue that, because infants, through natural incapacity, are not prepared to receive the Lord's Supper, they should not receive the rite of baptism, for which they have a capacity, is as illogical as the assertion, that a child should not be made the inheritor of an estate, because, at present, it could not manage its concerns; or that it should not have been circumcised, because it could not keep the whole law—to do which all who received that rite immediately became debtors!

That infants are proper subjects for Christian baptism, or for being dedicated to Christ, with the application of water, I assume has been rendered certain and plain, by the preceding discussion. To me, it is equally clear, that they are not mentally qualified for communion at the Lord's table. In the former case, persons are the mere passive recipients of a simple religious ceremony; in the latter, they are the intelligent performers of a high religious duty. In the Eucharist, the communicants are to partake of the elements in remembrance of Christ, or as a recognized memorial of his dying for their salvation. They are to examine themselves as to their own personal piety, character, and motives, previous to joining with others in this holy festival. They must discern the Lord's body, symbolized in breaking the bread and pouring out the wine, lest they eat and drink unworthily and to their own condemnation. 1 Cor. xi. 25, 28, 29. These are acts of which children of tender age, in no sense, are capable; and consequently, they are not qualified for the communion of saints at the Lord's table. Mr. Keach remarks, 'When Paul saith, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat," doth he not forbid infants to partake thereof, and all to come to the Lord's Supper, that do not so examine themselves, or who do

'not discern the Lord's body.' p. 229. He means, that all such are forbidden by implication. But, the truth is, they are forbidden to eat the Lord's Supper, simply because they cannot perform the works of faith, obedience, and love; just as our little ones might be said to be forbidden to eat ordinary food, because they cannot make a coat, or cultivate the vegetables in the garden! and for no other reason. Baptism is an initiatory, the Eucharist a commemorative, service.

Again, it is observable, that no person is said to have received water-baptism unworthily, or was in danger of doing so, for want of faith, love, or holiness; showing that the like intelligence, piety, and faith, so essential to communion at the Lord's table, were not essential, before approaching the baptismal font. Nor can we find an intimation in Scripture, that young children ever did unite with adults at this sacred feast; or even a remote hint, that they were qualified for such a spiritual act. It is repeatedly affirmed, that men and their families were baptized, and that men and their families believed the gospel; yet, it is never said that any man and his family united with the people of God in partaking of the Lord's Supper. In respect to these two ordinances the language is changed, indicating that the subjects of them were not always and necessarily the same; and also, by the bye, that in some of these families there were children too young to sit at the Lord's table. Moreover, while it is several times asserted, that, previous to baptism, persons ought to repent; such an admonition is never given to any previous to their coming to this sacrament—the assumption in the latter case being, that the communicants had, at least, professedly repented, previously to their presuming to take their seats around the sacramental board.

Let it, further, be noted, that the first recorded instance of children being taken to the Lord's table, and made participants of the elements of this ordinance, occurred nearly three hundred years after the birth of Christ. Dr. Newman says, 'Infant Communion was introduced into the church in the 'third century.' p. 50. The ground of this assertion the writer does not produce. But certain it is, from very ample data, that Infant Baptism long preceded Infant Communion. In the mean time, those who practised the former could not have believed that there was any immediate or necessary connexion between these sacraments, or they, too, would most assuredly have observed it, and brought their children to the Lord's table. Mr. Noel says, 'Infant Communion, which all admit

‘to be a corruption, was introduced as early’ [as Infant Baptism], ‘became as general, lasted centuries, and grew up ‘as silently.’ p. 253. His authority for such early Infant Communion is based on a mistaken view of Mr. Bingham’s statements on this question. The latter says, it continued in some churches six hundred years, and ceased in the ninth century; in others, it continued eight hundred years, and was abrogated in the twelfth century; showing that it could not have been commenced in any of them before between the third and fourth century—confirming Dr. Newman’s remark just given. The testimonies Bingham adduces, prove that Infant Baptism was earlier than Infant Communion by, at least, a hundred years. Mr. Noel is, therefore, sadly out in his chronology. All reliable historical authorities admit that Infant Baptism, if not apostolical, commenced long before Infant Communion.

It is also worthy of notice, that while the general church, the *Ecclesia* in its wide sense, was thrown open to all who were willing to enter, and to receive the privileges of hearing, learning, and uniting, with decorum, in public worship; the particular church, the *Ecclesia*, in its limited sense, was professedly barred against the manifestly unholy, the grossly ignorant, and confessedly unrenewed. The former fact we have already established; the latter may soon be made apparent, by citing a text or two:—‘I wrote unto you in an epistle *not* to company with fornicators. . . . But now I have ‘written unto you not to keep company, if any man [who] is ‘called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, ‘or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an ‘one, no not to eat.’ 1 Cor. v. 9, 11. ‘Now I beseech you ‘brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences ‘contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid ‘them.’ Rom. xvi. 17. ‘Now we command you, brethren, in ‘the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your- ‘selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not ‘after the tradition which ye received of us.’ 2 Thess. iii. 6. Hence, we gather, that spiritual Christians were not intimately to associate in this holy communion with any professors of the gospel, who conducted themselves disorderly, transgressed the great moral laws of Christianity, or who created divisions or contentions among the brethren. They were not to make special companions of them, or to eat with them at each other’s tables, and, much less, at the table of the Lord.

Mr. Stovel observes, ‘The supper of the Lord was not only

'used exclusively by persons baptized into Christ; but it also 'required them to be living as Christ had appointed.' *Dis.* p. 315. And, as we before argued, the present procedure of our opponents may be fairly regarded as an exposition of their views of the primitive practice in this case as in many others. Now, what would be thought of the members of a Baptist society, to whom the pastor might truly say what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: '*Change your drunken revellings into the 'sobriety of righteousness, and live no more in sin; for some 'of you know not God: I speak this to your shame.'*' 1 Cor. xv. 34. *Conybeare's Version.* This admonition, addressed to a promiscuous congregation, would present nothing very incongruous; but, to the accredited members of their inner church, seems totally inappropriate. Mr. Hall says, 'The 'admission' [even] 'of spectators, who were not members of 'the church, during the administration of the Lord's Supper, 'was comparatively a modern innovation.'—'During the 'celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the early Christian 'church, none but believers in full communion with the 'church, were allowed to be present, and all who were present 'partook of the ordinance.' *Faiths of the World.*

It is remarkable, that the distinction of classes and characters was much more observed at the table than any where else. The uncircumcised must not eat the passover with the circumcised, however virtuous and dignified in life and position. It was brought as a charge against Christ, that he ate with publicans and sinners, though talking and dealing with them were unnoticed. So it was in the east aforetime, and is so even now. Joseph must eat separately from his brethren. The Hindoo of high caste will trade and converse with an inferior, but will not eat with him, and much less with a Christian. The holy followers of Christ might hear with, talk with, trade with, and worship with, their ungodly and disorderly brethren; but they must not partake of a sacred meal with them. Here was the chiefly manifest division between sincere and consistent Christians, and the evidently unconverted. Yet, against the baptism of unrenewed and unrighteous persons not a syllable is uttered by Christ or his apostles. In fact, all were invited to hear the gospel in the fields, streets, synagogues, or houses of Christian friends. Hence, the distinction I have been aiming to establish, that persons were deemed qualified for baptism, who were not regarded as prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper. Mr. Hall supports this view of the subject: 'The communion



‘has no retrospective reference to baptism, nor is baptism an anticipation of communion. Enjoined at different times, and appointed for different purposes, they are capable, without the least inconvenience, of being contemplated apart; and on no occasion are they mentioned in such a connexion as to imply, much less to assert, that the one is enjoined with a view to the other.’ p. 37.

The preceding remarks confirm the propriety of the distinction we formerly made between the general and the particular congregations of Christians, in the first ages of the Christian economy. We endeavoured to prove, that the *Ecclesia*, in its wider sense, embraced the assemblies of the converted and the unconverted, who were baptized unto the profession of Christianity, (as distinguished from an open adherence to Judaism, idolatry, or atheism,) and the supposed regenerated followers of Jesus Christ—whose conduct indicated that they loved, trusted, and laboured to obey, the Son of God. These latter constituted the *Ecclesia*, or congregation, in its narrower sense, and met in spiritual communion at the table of the Lord. It is now further apparent, there was also a distinction founded on *age* as well as on character. We have shown, that children formed a part, and, probably, a considerable part, of the Christian or believing congregations, in which the epistles were read, preaching conducted, and prayer offered to God. But, we have also seen, that children, baptized or not, formed no part of the communicants at the Lord’s table, or of the congregation in its limited sense, for some centuries after Christ, nor until great corruptions had been introduced to the profession of the gospel. This evinces, that there were two classes of people, in the first times of the Christian church, recognized as disciples, and followers of Christ, the same as in the present day, by our opponents as well as by ourselves; and, indeed, to a greater or less degree, by most, if not all, the professors of the Christian religion. However lax and culpable might have been the discipline of the first churches, in respect of adult communion; it is certain the distinction, for which I have been contending, was preserved in the case of the younger members of the Christian community.

OBJECTION III.—*It is asserted that there ought to be the same connexion between baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as there was between circumcision and the passover.*—Gibbs says, ‘All children who were circumcised partook of the passover—all children who were baptized should receive the Lord’s Supper. All children who were circumcised

‘were thenceforth considered members of the Jewish church’ [or great congregation]; ‘and without any subsequent conversion or profession of faith were entitled to all its privileges’ [as far as they could use them]—‘all children who are ‘baptized, should be received as members of the visible ‘church’ [or congregation], ‘and have a right to *its* privileges’ [as far as they can use them], ‘independent of any work of ‘grace, or profession of faith, in their future lives.’ p. 321. This objection, like many others, to Infant Baptism, is founded on a fallacy. What proof have we that all who were circumcised immediately afterwards partook of the paschal feast? Every male child of eight days old was actually circumcised. Was it, at that age, to eat the passover, to gird up its loins, to take its pilgrim’s staff, and to masticate roast lamb and unleavened bread, or hard biscuits, like a man! The idea is absurd. Besides, these two institutions had a perfectly independent origin—one preceding the other by four hundred years. The passover had no special primitive reference to the Abrahamic covenant, like circumcision. And though both had God for their author, their designs were different; one had a direct allusion to the sanctification of the heart, the other to the redemption of the soul by the blood of Christ. Their subsequent connexion was incidental; just as circumcision became related to the Mosaic priesthood and the tabernacle worship, to sacrifices and the various ablutions and consecrations.

There is no command for babes, though circumcised, to partake of the passover. None were to eat it, unless they were circumcised, really—or virtually, as grown-up females. But it does not follow, that every circumcised male was immediately to eat it. None but really converted persons ought to preach the gospel; but it does not thence follow, that every pious person should occupy a Christian pulpit. A stranger could not partake of the passover till himself and his male children were circumcised; but the children, though circumcised, are not enjoined to partake of it also, nor the parents to give it to them. Ex. xii. 48, 49. Though circumcised in a state of infancy, they were to be subsequently taught the laws, wonders, and works of God; and when duly enlightened on these points, were probably permitted formally to unite in this festal celebration. Deut. vi. 1-9. It was also like the Lord’s Supper, at least, partly a commemorative service; and could be intelligently observed only by persons when of age to reflect on their great deliverance out of Egypt. Ex. xii. 26, 27.

Our Lord came up to the passover when he was twelve years of age; and likely that was about the period of life when children were deemed meet to receive this ordinance.

Again, it is certain, that openly wicked persons were not to be regarded, relative to external religious matters, with the same favour as the virtuous and the devout; were not to be treated ceremonially with the like indulgence; and, very probably, if known to be profane, were not allowed to partake of the passover at the annual gatherings, even though it was a national institution. 'But unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth.' Ps. l. 16, 17. 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of beasts; I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats,' [which you offer]. 'When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; your incense is an abomination unto me.' Is. i. 11-15. Who will aver that such characters were welcome to God's passover, or, if known, cheerfully permitted to eat thereof in the company of virtuous and devout Israelites? We find, that the ceremonially unclean, except under very pressing and peculiar circumstances, might not eat of the passover till they were purified. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. 'And many went out of the country up to Jerusalem, before the passover to purify themselves.' John xi. 55. 'And they went not into the judgement hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.' *Ib.* xviii. 28; intimating, that the ceremonially unsanctified could not partake of it. 'And with bitter herbs they shall eat it.' Ex. xii. 8. 'These bitter herbs might be an emblem of godly sorrow, deep repentance, self-denial, and mortification of depraved passions.' *Scott.* Teaching us, that a moral and spiritual preparation for the passover was required of old, as there is now for the Lord's passover under the gospel.

We may, therefore, reasonably infer, that the morally profane, the open transgressors of God's laws, and the manifestly impenitent, ought not to have attended it. The question is not, what a lax discipline, and a negligent or sin-conning priesthood might tolerate, contrary to the word of God; but what his will really was concerning the religious character of the communicants. The rules of both Independent and Baptist churches—which we regard as scriptural in this

particular—are, that none, except really enlightened adult Christian people, should sit down at the Lord's table. That unholy and unrenewed people do commune in these ordinances occasionally or constantly, does not alter their rules, nor prove that such persons ought to be there. Our Lord says, no one should offer his gift on the Jewish altar, while indulging enmity in his mind against his brother; commanding such angry people first to go and be reconciled to their brother, and then to come and offer their gifts. Matt. v. 24. This is the law, however it may occasionally be broken. Is it not, therefore, highly probable, that openly wicked and profane people, even though they had been duly circumcised, ought not to partake of the passover; and if so, there is no inseparable connexion between these two divine ordinances; any more than between adult baptism and the Lord's Supper among our opponents—which is observed only during good behaviour.

Having seen that there was no immediate, necessary, or invariable connexion between circumcision and the passover, the inference, founded on a contrary assumption, falls to the ground. But, even had these ordinances been united, as the objection takes for granted, it does not follow, that the Lord's Supper and baptism must be equally conjoined. Mr. Hall says, 'Our opponents' [the close communionists] 'are extremely fond of representing baptism, under the New Testament, as essential as circumcision under the Old, inferring from thence, that no unbaptized person is admissible to the Eucharist, for the same reason that no one who was not circumcised, was permitted to partake of the paschal feast. But, beside that this is to reason from analogy, a practice against which, when applied to the discussion of positive institutes, they, on other occasions, earnestly protest, the analogy fails in the most essential points. Circumcision is expressly stated as a necessary condition of admission to the passover; [when the sex and age are not preventives]; 'a similar statement respecting baptism will decide the controversy.' p. 46. 'A Jew would have found no difficulty in establishing this fact respecting' [the ultimate connexion between] 'circumcision and the passover: he would have immediately pointed to the book of Exodus, where we find an express prohibition of an uncircumcised person from partaking of the paschal lamb. Let some similar evidence be adduced on the present subject—let some declaration from Scripture be exhibited, which distinctly prohibits the celebration of the Lord's Supper by



'any person who, from a misconception of its nature, has omitted the baptismal ceremony,' [or received it in infancy,] 'and the controversy will be at rest.' *Ib.* p. 185. However, as I have not treated Infant Baptism as based on, or coming in the place of, infant circumcision, but on the early baptism of the Hebrews, and its perpetuation by Jesus Christ; the objection has little actual bearing on my arguments. The objection is referred to, because I am unwilling to pass by any plausible, though groundless, assertions, adverse to the practice of Infant Baptism. Had Mr. Gibbs *proved*, that all who were purified, cleansed, or baptized, under the law, immediately and invariably ate the passover; he would have said something more parallel, and to the point in hand.

Several preceding observations indicate our opinion, that there is no necessary connexion between baptism and the Lord's Supper—any more than there is between hearing the Gospel in the public congregation, and sitting down at the table of the Lord. In this opinion I am sustained by the judgment of some of the best men among our opponents. Let me simply subjoin the statement of Dr. Gill on this head, in addition to that of Mr. Hall, just quoted:—'Baptism is not a church ordinance; I mean, it is not an ordinance administered in the church, but out of it, and, in order to admission into it, and communion with it; it is preparatory to it; and a qualification for it; it does not make a person a member; or admit him into a visible church. Persons must first be baptized; and then added to the church, as the three thousand converts were. A church has nothing to do with the baptism of any, but, to be satisfied they are baptized, before they are admitted into communion with it.' The church may keep the baptized out of it perpetually, should its members disapprove of the connexion. Hence, their baptism is rather into the congregation generally, than into the internal congregation, or what is now commonly called the church—treating the baptized adult simply as we do a baptized infant.

It is remarkable, that though we read of eating the Lord's Supper unworthily, and to men's own condemnation, through not discerning the Lord's body—as, doubtless, many Hebrews ate the passover unworthily, not recognizing the spiritual design of that institution; we nowhere read of any persons, young or old, receiving baptism or circumcision unworthily, through a lack of knowledge or a befitting moral character; clearly evincing that the two former rites stood on very different grounds from the two latter. The Eucharist is hedged

in, like the tree of life in Eden; and none but the truly renewed and sincere may eat of its provisions but at the peril of a sinful presumption. Yet, water-baptism is surrounded by no such fences, nor indeed by any, it being open to all who wish to receive it, or are brought to the font for that purpose. What is more to the point; our blessed Lord, who knew what was in man, most probably saw his immediate disciples baptize thousands of unconverted people and their families, without ever indicating that any of them were unsuitable subjects, or saying that certain intellectual or religious qualifications were necessary before receiving this rite. This evinces a marked and material distinction between the persons scripturally baptized, and scripturally communicating at the Lord's table.

While Dr. Gill's statement corroborates my opinion, that there is no necessary intimate connexion between receiving baptism and the Lord's Supper, I think he has failed to make a proper distinction between the general and the particular churches or congregations of Christ. And it is the want of rightly discriminating in this case, that has puzzled so many minds, and so greatly involved this question. I have shown, I believe, to the satisfaction of the attentive and candid reader, that people, of all characters and ages, were baptized into the general church, or into the profession, congregation, seminary, or training school, of Christianity; but not into the select, particular, or regenerated assembly, society, or church of Christ. It is certain that the Jailer, Cornelius, the Eunuch, and many other converts to Christianity, were baptized into the general church, but not into any particular or select communion of saints; though afterwards they might have been admitted into full membership in some holy fellowship of spiritual believers, or have themselves constituted such in their own localities.

Objectors may still urge on us the practices of the churches during the third and fourth centuries, as being opposed to the doctrine I am now advocating. They may tell us, that baptized infants, as well as adults, were accustomed to communicate at the Lord's Supper. This is admitted. But, as we all know that innovations, the most puerile and unchristian, had then been made in the services of religion, and most of which our opponents cordially reject; such an intimate connexion between the rites in question can have no influence in deciding this specific question. 'About the same 'time,' says Lord King, 'persons who designed to leave

'heathenism and idolatry, and desired to be members of a Christian church, were not presently advanced to that degree, but were first continued a certain space of time in the rank of catechumens or the catechised ones....that they might be instructed in the articles of the Christian faith....and give demonstration of the reality of their intentions, by the change of their lives, and the holiness of their conversation. ....These were permitted "to come to church," where they stood in a place by themselves, and were present at the services which were adapted to their capacities, being discourses of the ordinary and less mysterious truths of the Gospel.' *Lord King's Prim. Hist.* pt. i. ch. vi. These, be it remarked, were not little children belonging to baptized parents; for, at the time referred to, such were confessedly baptized, and even brought to the Lord's Supper; but, young or adult persons, from the ranks of heathenism, desirous of being recognized as Christians by baptism, and ultimately received into full communion with the church. Further, we here perceive a distinction, for which we had previously contended, between the *Ecclesia* generally, and the *Ecclesia* in particular—the outer and the inner churches. I lay no stress on this fact, but simply refer to it as explaining and confirming my foregoing proposition on this head.—Adding, however, that if infants were regarded as members of the inner church, they could have exercised no power in its affairs, any more than the seats they occupied; even though they might have been the most innocent and holy of the entire community. At most, they could not have been more than *half-members*; as the term members is now understood in all free Christian communions.

I may here notice Fuller's argument, drawn from the words of our text, to sustain his doctrine of close communion:—'If the apostle had not connected baptism and the Lord's Supper together in his mind, how came he so pointedly to allude to them both in this passage?' He brings forward also another text for the same purpose, in which St. Paul affirms, we are all 'baptized into one body, and are all made to drink the same Spirit.' Mr. Tombes long before wrote, 'If this verse—1 Cor. x. 2.—prove that infants were baptized, the verses following will prove that they received the Lord's Supper.' *Exer.* p. 20. To this reasoning Mr. Hall replies, 'It is freely admitted that these, and, perhaps, other texts which might be adduced, afford examples of an allusion to the two ordinances at the same time, whence we may be

‘certain that they were present together in the mind of the writer. But whoever considers the law of association, must be aware how trivial a circumstance is sufficient to unite together in the mind ideas of objects among which no essential relation subsists. The mere coincidence of time and place is sufficient for that purpose. In addressing a class of persons distinguished by the possession of peculiar privileges, what more natural than to combine them in joint allusion, without intending to assert their relation or dependence; just as in addressing a British audience on a political occasion, the speaker may be easily supposed to remind them, at the same time, of their popular representation, of the liberty of the press, and the trial by jury, without meaning to affirm that they are incapable of being possessed apart.’ p. 215.

But supposing, what I do not concede, that, in the apostle’s mind, the ideas of Christian baptism and the Lord’s Supper were associated, when alluding to the baptism in the sea, and to the eating of the manna, six weeks after, in the wilderness; it does not follow, that the two former acts, must be chronologically as nearly related as the two latter. Even if the conjunction were really as intimate between Christian baptism and the Eucharist, as it was between the baptism in the sea and the descent of the manna; the only consistent inference would be, that recently baptized babies should partake of the Lord’s Supper; and not, that they should not be baptized. And let it be borne in mind, that our work is not designed to oppose infant communion; but to defend Infant Baptism. And it is simply to oppose the latter, that its supposed connexion with the former is contended for. The baptism of children in the sea is certain; and our inference, that children were baptized at Corinth, is inevitable. The only question here is, Were they brought to the Lord’s table immediately or very soon after? or was it deferred for years, or till they were as qualified to participate in this second ordinance, as they were to eat of the manna and water in the wilderness? Our opponents tell us, that infant communion commenced about three hundred years after Christ. Mr. Hall, who admits, that Paul probably connected the ideas of baptism and the Lord’s Supper under the Christian dispensation, as he did the baptism in the sea, with the bread from heaven—yet contends, that the Christian sacraments, even in the case of adults, might be widely separated in their ministrations; in fact, that practically there might have been no connexion at all between them—and his reasoning is plain and irrefutable.



But, it is clear to me, that, in the passage under notice, Paul did not especially, if at all, connect the ideas of the bread from heaven and the water from the rock, with the Lord's Supper. There was little or nothing sufficiently common to produce a particular or distinct identification of them in his mind. The Lord's Supper was administered with a loaf of unleavened bread, broken in pieces, and a cup of wine handed round to each devout guest; intended to represent the bruised and broken body of Christ, and the shedding of his precious blood. The manna fell like dew, looked like coriander seed, was daily collected, and then cooked over the fire before eaten. The water was dipped from the stream that followed them some way in the wanderings of the Hebrews. This, too, formed a solitary or domestic meal. The truth is, that the Lord's Supper would call to the mind of a Jew an idea of the Passover of the ancient Israelites, and be intimately associated with that chiefly, if not exclusively; and Paul would naturally connect the spiritual meat and the spiritual drink of the wilderness with the ministrations of the Gospel, the Word of God, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the gracious means, by which men were supported and refreshed in their divine life. God's Word contains strong meat for them that are of full age, and milk for babes. His Gospel drops as the rain and distils as the dew. Few will question, that the means of Christian enlightenment are far more valuable to mankind than even the Lord's Supper. This latter was not regularly administered, probably, for many years after its institution, and, then, possibly, at considerable intervals; while preaching, and the other ordinances for leading sinners to Christ, were the daily manna and supplies of living water, attended to immediately, earnestly, and continuously, during the apostles' times.

In the following chapter, (1 Cor. xi.), the apostle commences by referring to the impropriety of men praying or preaching with their heads covered; and of women doing the like with their heads uncovered; and then proceeds to the subject of the Lord's Supper, on which he enlarges in a most emphatic manner. However, these separate topics might succeed each other in the mind of the writer, it is clear that, in themselves, they are perfectly distinct. He might as logically have been discussing the question of submission to the will of Christ generally, and then have proceeded to the duty of training up youth religiously, or to conduct themselves properly in the house of God. In the present chapter (the 10th), Paul

speaks of the privileges and the impiety of the Hebrews, as conveying lessons of deep moment to the Corinthians; and then goes on to guard them against countenancing idolatry, by eating things offered to idols. To show them the gross inconsistency of their doing so, he points to persons eating the supper of the Lord and meats offered to idols—of drinking the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Hence, to build an argument in support of intimately and invariably uniting baptism and the Eucharist in the same person, on the ground assumed by Mr. Fuller, is to evince, at least, a conscious lack of other passable evidence on the subject.

But though, from Paul's allusion in the text, Mr. Fuller fails to prove a close and invariable connexion between baptism and the Lord's Supper, he fully concedes the fact, that the Hebrews were baptized in the Red Sea, and that, too, without any exception of rank, sex, or age. He admits, that, in the apostle's mind, the baptism in the Sea and the baptism at Corinth, were intimately associated; and, that this association of ideas was occasioned by the general similitude of the ordinances in both places. And, as he must have known, that unconverted people and children were the subjects of this rite, administered during the exodus of the Israelites, he could scarcely have failed to perceive the want of a proper analogy between the two cases, had not unconverted people and children been the subjects of the rite administered at Corinth and elsewhere, under the Gospel dispensation. Whether the entire parallel were apparent to him, is not manifest. But, he does sustain our previous arguments and quotations, designed to prove, that the baptism unto Moses was a precursor to the baptism unto Christ, in the judgment of the great apostle to the gentiles. Farther than this, one could hardly expect any genuine Baptist to go. To have drawn our inference, which is both fair and inevitable, would have been fatal to his cause as a Baptist, especially of the close communionist section of it.

SECTION EIGHTH.—*The Scriptural advantages of baptized children over those that are not baptized.*—If baptism do not convey all the religious privileges some persons ascribe to its administration, and whose mistakes, on this head, have, doubtless, chiefly arisen from confounding the baptism with water and the baptism with the Holy Ghost, the type with the antitype, the sign with the thing signified, and the general church with the particular; still, unquestionably, there must

be some great benefits righteously arising from it, as from all other divinely instituted ordinances; or Christ would never have had people baptized at first, nor made the rite a standing sacrament in his congregations to the end of time. The baptism unto Moses, as Mr. Stovel justly argues, was succeeded by many important advantages which, without baptism, we are warranted in supposing, in accordance with God's general rules and arrangements, the Israelites would not have been entitled to enjoy. That Paul, in our text, reasons on the same principle, no candid person will, for a moment, question --for, otherwise, his inferences would have been destitute of any valid premises from which to draw them. Mr. Noel says, 'As the baptized Jewish proselytes became, by Jewish baptism, the avowed disciple of Moses, entitled to all Mosaic ordinances, so the baptized Christian proselyte becomes, by Christian baptism, the avowed disciple of Christ, entitled to all Christian ordinances;' [or to all of which he is properly capable.] p. 49. When Paul refers to the manna and the water in the wilderness, given by the Almighty to the Hebrews, it is instantly perceived, that they represented great and essential benefits for the people. The conjunction of baptism with these supplies of physical sustenance, in the argument of the apostle, plainly indicates that they were both regarded as blessings, and that a deprivation of the former, would also have been a serious loss. From this inference, there is no fairly escaping.

Our Baptist brethren professedly conjoin high social privileges with adult or believers' baptism; a recognition of faith and fitness for admission into the society of the saints, or of those separated from the world and joined in religious worship, if not with an immediate association with the people of God, in the participation of the highest church ordinances. A lack of these they ever regard as a material defect in every one professing the Christian name; and they urge submission to the ordinance as of great benefit to their brethren, especially on doubting Pedobaptists! Circumcision conveyed high and gracious advantages to its subjects, chiefly that of having a divine right to possess, read, and self-appropriate, the oracles of God. The baptized also have a legitimate claim on the ministers and people of God for religious instruction and spiritual oversight, in the Christian congregations, or the schools of the gospel. The baptized, when grown to years of reflection, will perceive a special obligation resting on themselves to love and obey that divine Being to whom they were devoutly

consecrated by beloved parents; and which act may be a great religious benefit to the young all the future days of their lives.

Dr. Lightfoot observes, 'Baptism also brings its *privileges* 'along with it, while it opens the way to a partaking of holy 'things in the church; and places the baptized within the 'church,' [or congregation], 'over which God exerciseth a 'more singular providence, than over those that are out of the 'church.' Dr. E. Williams remarks, 'Baptism is a benefit 'and privilege when applied to capable subjects, possessing 'all the qualifications necessary to answer the Scriptural 'design of the ordinance. That it is a benefit to such is 'apparent, when we consider what baptism, when applied, 'necessarily includes. It includes a relative change of state; 'thereby, the subject is translated, ministerially, from a state 'of distance to a state of nearness; is separated from the 'world and joined to the universal church; is thereby legally 'entitled to all the other external privileges of the gospel 'dispensation, of which the subject is capable, this being the 'right *initiation* to them. Again, it includes a dedication of 'the subject to Father, Son, and Spirit; is a *seal* of God's 'covenant to the subject, assuring him, to his dying day, that 'there are *exhibited* to him exceeding great and precious 'promises; and, of course, lays a foundation for the most 'rational and interesting obligations of duty. And, indeed, 'the single consideration of baptism laying all suitable subjects, 'to whom it is ministerially applied, under such obligations, 'is alone decisive in support of the point under consideration. 'And here we may ask, if infants are capable and suitable 'subjects, as we have proved they are, and if the above 'important particulars belong to all those when baptized, as '*such*; what greater *benefit* can we conceive to appertain to 'a divine institution? Could Paul himself regard his baptism 'in a more beneficial light?' vol. i. p. 220.

Locke says, 'To be baptized to any one, is to be devoted to 'him, to receive and acknowledge him as a teacher, professing 'to receive his rules, and to be governed by his authority.' Mr. Noel states, 'To be baptized unto Christ, or unto Moses, 'or unto Paul, means to be' [or to become] 'his follower or 'disciple, consecrated to his service.' p. 34. Turretin reasons, 'The word which Christ here uses, does not so properly 'signify, to teach by preaching, as to *make disciples*, which 'may be done by baptism; it being a sacrament of initiation. 'Thus, John iv. 1, *Mathetas poiein*, is not simply to teach,



‘but to make disciples, and to introduce into a professional state of discipline, as among the Jews; persons were often made disciples, not as already taught, *but in order to be taught*. Thus a gentile addressed Hillel, “Make a proselyte of me, that thou mayest teach me.” And that the word is so to be understood here (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), is demonstrable from the word, afterwards, rendered *teaching*, which appears tautological, unless the first word refers to something more than that.’ See *Isaac*, p. 90. Hence, no proselyting, no teaching, in the usual sense of that word. ‘Infant Baptism,’ says Wills, ‘lays a singular good foundation for knowledge; for in that children are taken into Christ’s school, they are in a near capacity to be taught, and those who recommend them to that ordinance, are obliged to promote their knowledge, and to see them brought up, *Nouthesia Kuriou*, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’ p. 272.

If, then, baptism introduces the baptized to certain important benefits, it necessarily follows, *that not to be baptized, is not to be canonically introduced to them*. Hence, unbaptized persons are not Scripturally entitled to that Christian instruction and oversight to which this rite is an introduction; just as an uncircumcised Israelite would not have been entitled to the benefits of the covenant made with Abraham and his circumcised posterity; and just as an undipped believer is not permitted to full religious communion among the majority of our brethren; or among any of them, consistently with the principles on which they mainly rest their adult immersion. Dr. Addington, having enumerated the religious benefits legitimately resulting from Infant Baptism; Dr. Stennett makes the following reply:—‘Now, Sir, *If* these advantages, which, no doubt, are very great and important, were the natural and proper effect of baptism to infants, or if the ceremony was appointed by God to these ends; or if omission of it did at all lessen the obligations to parents to take care of the education of their children, or of children to make all suitable returns to their parents, and to demean themselves well in life, and of ministers to instruct and exhort them both to their several duties: *If* this were the case, I acknowledge it would be *cruel* and *impious* to deny them to children.’ Such privileges I regard as legitimately belonging only to the baptized; and, therefore, assert, that, to deny baptism to infants, is virtually to deny them all those advantages.

Mr. Stovel will have it, that no good can accrue to infants from baptism, unless they are regenerated by it. ‘Pedobaptists plead

‘for the right of infants, or the children of believers, to Christian baptism. Now, what are we to understand by a right? Is it not a claim to some good, in the enjoyment of which we are to be protected by a just administration of the law? Such I understand the term ‘right.’ If so, then, what is the good which infants find in baptism? For since they have a right to it, and it is wrong to withhold it, there must be a good in it, or the right is a right to nothing. It is plain, therefore, that this notion of Baptismal’ [Regenerating] ‘grace, confessed or not confessed, has still been retained, wherever the baptism of infants is *thus* defended.’ *Reg. Lec. xi. p. 45.* According to this logic, a person cannot have a right to an inferior good, unless he also have a right to a superior one; no right to education without a right to a fortune; no right to the means of grace, except he have a claim or right to the gift of eternal life. But, all children have their rights, according to their positions and relationships—nor will it be denied, that children, baptized unto Christ, have a right to certain privileges which do not belong to others not so devoted to him. What these privileges are, the present discussion is intended to show and establish.

I will here reiterate a few observations of Mr. Noel, appropriate to the present section of our treatise. ‘The ‘circumcision of the unregenerate infant was a blessing to him, because it introduced him to a moral and religious ‘training’ [whether he really obtained it or not]; but, ‘the ‘baptism of the unregenerate infant is a mischief to it, ‘because, while it adds nothing to his means of instruction,’ [unless it be viewed as the ground thereof,] ‘it deludes him ‘with the mockery of a pretended adoption into the family of ‘God, which may hinder him from seeking a real adoption.... ‘No one was permitted to receive the token of the first ‘covenant, whether child, slave, or stranger, who was not in ‘the first; and as infants cannot be shown to be within the ‘second covenant,’ [which is substantially the same as the first,] ‘because they cannot be shown to be believers,’ [any more than the little Hebrews!] ‘so, by the analogy of ‘circumcision, they ought not to receive its tokens.’ Here we are told that circumcision was necessary to introduce children to religious training. The same doctrine we hold respecting the effect of Infant Baptism. Children being in the ancient covenant, or being the seed of Abraham, according to the promise, did not, of itself, entitle them to especial moral and religious training; but they must first be

circumcised. We believe the same respecting the children of believing parents—baptize them first, and then teach them. As to adult candidates for baptism, being believers before undergoing this rite, the same held true with regard to all adults, admitted to circumcision. The avowed infidel heathen would not have been admitted to circumcision, any more than he would be now admitted to Christian baptism. As to infant delusion, the notion originates in a gross misconception of the design of the rite of infant consecration to God; and it may follow a dry dedication to the Lord as readily as one with water; and, to a dipped adult, far more so than to a sprinkled child. Mr. Noel says, ‘Circumcision to the Lord is similar ‘to baptism to the Lord.’ Yet, he labours hard to prove, were it possible, that no two rites were more dissimilar!

He proceeds, ‘Every reader can see at once that unregenerate infants might be circumcised, because capable,’ [through their precocious powers!] ‘as well as unregenerate adults, ‘of conformity to the law; but unregenerate infants should ‘not be baptized, because they are utterly excluded’ [for lack of the like infant talents of the Hebrews!] ‘so long as they ‘remain unregenerate, from all the privileges and blessings of ‘the gospel.’ p. 184. But could the little Hebrew babies ‘do ‘the whole law,’ any more than the little English ones can do the whole gospel? Where did Mr. Noel learn, that regeneration was necessary prior to baptism, any more than to circumcision? Not in the New Testament, most assuredly. And where did he discover the ungracious doctrine, that unregenerated infants are ‘utterly excluded from all the privileges and blessings of ‘the gospel?’ Of course, they must *not* be taught, or trained in the way of divine truth; since this would be a great privilege and blessing! Alas! what appalling consequences frequently and necessarily flow from the adoption of unscriptural principles. Again, ‘As Judaism had its initiatory rite, so it is ‘useful that Christianity should have its initiatory rite likewise.’ p. 17. The initiatory rite of Judaism was chiefly to moral and religious training, not previously enjoyed. So it is to the first Christian religious instruction now; or there would be no analogy left. But, must none but the regenerate be taught the doctrines of the gospel of Christ? But, in truth, *our opponents have no Scriptural introductory rite to Christianity at all.* They have an introductory rite to membership in their select denominational societies. Yet, surely, these are not to be regarded as comprehending all Christianity—which embraces the teachings, and many other privileges, of the Saviour’s

religion, and which may be enjoyed by the young, and even by adults too, not spiritually converted to God. In most cases, their people are introduced to Christianity long before they are admitted into the fellowship of their inner churches. Indeed, they profess to dip none but well-instructed and divinely-qualified Christians,—who must, therefore, have been introduced to Christianity, in some way or other, long before hand.

Further, 'If baptism be the sign of regeneration, an 'unregenerate person ought not to be baptized.' p. 112. Yet, 'Circumcision was intended to signify the circumcision of the 'heart.' p. 173. But, were none circumcised, save the regenerate? 'If baptism is the washing of regeneration, it ought 'not to be administered to the unregenerate.' *Ib.* But, why wash the regenerate only, who certainly need it the least? Were none anciently allowed to have the type of a blessing unless they had previously received the blessing itself? Were circumcision and baptism *seals* fixed on the subjects of them, testifying that they were really and personally regenerated? Would Mr. Noel undertake to stamp the foreheads of all he dips with this inscription—'DIVINELY REGENERATE?' 'The 'baptism of the believer and the baptism of the infant are two 'different baptisms; the precept which enjoins the one, rather, 'by inference, forbids the other.' p. 126. As previously inquired, Was the circumcision of an adult proselyte different from that of his child; and did that which enjoined the circumcision of the father rather forbid that of his little sons? Pray, did the Jews understand the matter in this sense? Are the regeneration of a man and the regeneration of a child two different or two incompatible regenerations? And does the fact, that a man may be regenerated imply, that a child cannot be? But, if the regeneration be essentially the same in the adult and the infant—which our opponents will not deny—why may not the signs or symbols be alike in both of them?

Dr. Carson, perceiving the difficulty involved in such notions as Mr. Noel's, says, 'As to parents and children, circumcision 'was no privilege at all. Had circumcision made the children 'of the Jews heirs either of Canaan or of heaven, it might be 'considered as a privilege, but it did neither. It was not enjoined, 'nor ever explained as a privilege to individuals. It was enjoined 'by the most severe penalty, even death. The females had 'no loss by the want of it. They enjoyed every spiritual 'privilege equally with the males; and the want of circum-



'cision did not deprive them even of any temporal privilege 'which they would have enjoyed.' p. 230. But, it is plain, according to Paul, there was *much profit* in circumcision, though enforced by severe penalties. Rom. iii. 1, 2. If it were national, it was also individual, and universal; all were benefitted by it. Though the males only underwent the rite, they represented the females; and both shared alike in the advantages of it. Men go to war, and the women who tarry at home, divide the spoil. While circumcision might not assure an inheritance in Canaan to every descendant of Abraham, nor heaven, of necessity, to any one of them; it guaranteed to all a title to the oracles of God, and the means of grace; and salvation to all earnestly desirous of obtaining it. If these were not individual privileges, and of the highest order, divine benevolence assuredly bestowed none on his ancient people. Mr. Tombes says, 'The truth is,' that 'though circumcision *was a privilege to the Jews* . . . it is a 'great privilege to us and our children that they have neither 'it, nor any other thing in the place and use of it, but Christ 'manifest in the flesh.' *Exam.* p. 101. Dipping adults, however, it seems is a great privilege to them, and must be maintained at any cost of labour, talent, and time! though it requires the eye of an inspired seer to discover it! The grounds of Mr. Tombes' congratulation, that we have nothing in the place of circumcision, are left to conjecture.—To return to Mr. Noel:—

'Since baptism is the seal of regeneration, none but the 'regenerate ought to be baptized; since it is the sign of 'justification, it should be administered to those only who are 'justified; since it was attended by the gift of the Spirit, 'none but believers, to whom that gift was limited, ought to 'to receive it; since it saves, and there is no salvation 'except by faith; and since it confers the right of admission 'into the churches of the saints and faithful brethren, none 'but saints and faithful brethren ought to receive it. If 'unbelievers are baptized, baptism is a sign of regeneration 'to the unregenerate, and of justification to those who are 'still in their sins; it ought to save, and does not, and admits 'into communion with the churches those who are unfitted 'for the privilege.' p. 118.

Had Mr. Noel substituted 'If,' for 'Since,' throughout the paragraph, and given us hypotheses instead of implied affirmations, one might have viewed the whole as an inquiry after truth. In its present form, it looks like the positive

imposition of unquestionable dogmas. As remarked before, where is baptism said to be the seal or declaration of spiritual regeneration; or the certain sign of a person's being already justified, or of divine internal gifts bestowed on those that are baptized, and limited to them? Where did he learn, that water-baptism saves the souls of any of its subjects? Can Puseyism or Popery convey more heterodox or dangerous notions, than taught in the above quotation? If persons are regenerated, justified, endowed with gifts, and saved beforehand; how can this rite be said to have produced such results, or have any necessary connexion with them? He might as truly have said, the Lord's Supper produces the same or similar consequences. Certainly, it is never said, they are prerequisites to the reception of this ordinance. Where is it asserted, that 'baptism ought to save, and does 'not?' Are we to consider this a saving rite? And where did our opponent learn, that Infant Baptism 'admits into 'communion with the churches those who are unfitted for 'the privilege?' Not among Pedobaptist dissenters, nor, as shown elsewhere, even in the state-religion.

He proceeds, 'Since the Scriptures declare, that persons are 'to be baptized for the remission of sins, (Acts ii. 38), that 'they should be baptized and wash away their sins, (Acts xxii. '16), 'that they are buried with Christ, and rise with him in 'baptism, (Col. ii. 12), that the baptized put on Christ, (Gal. iii. '27), and that they are saved by baptism, (1 Peter iii. 21); if 'these passages are applied to infants, it is very difficult to avoid 'the conclusion, that they are renewed and justified in 'baptism.' p. 127. But, is it not equally difficult, if applied to dipping adults in water? The notion of this writer, that in the above passages, baptism is put for the profession of faith in men and women, is perfectly gratuitous, and exhibits an attempt to evade a difficulty he does not appear prepared rightly to master.

I will just subjoin the following conflicting sentiments from two of his brethren:—Mr. Gibbs, 'We do not believe that a 'man is more fit for church membership after baptism than 'he was before, in consequence of his receiving any moral or 'spiritual qualification by attending to this ordinance'.... 'The supposition, that any spiritual blessing is conveyed by 'baptism cannot be supported without allowing the popish 'doctrine of baptismal regeneration.' *Ib.* p. 15, 16. And, yet, Mr. Foot, in a work recommended by Mr. Pearce, of Birmingham, and Dr. Murch, of Stepney, says, 'The first privilege of

'Christian baptism is the forgiveness of sins. The Scripture evidently teaches us to consider baptism as attended with this . . . Now, since baptism is for the remission of sins, is not this an advantage worthy of your glad acceptance?' p. 22, 79. He means, the baptism of adults; for infants have no actual sins to be forgiven. This language is absolutely popish. Whether Mr. Noel's opinions most accord with Scripture and Mr. Gibbs, or with popery and Mr. Foot, let the candid readers of the above extracts decide for themselves.

It may amuse the intelligent reader to learn Mr. Stovel's notions concerning 'The advantages derived to personal religion, from a strict adherence to the scriptural rule of baptizing accredited believers only,' (*Reg. Lec. v.*), and to see if there be any real good to be obtained from the practice of it, not equally secured to all accredited members in our Pedobaptist congregational churches. I challenge him to discover even the shadow of it. 'We shall trace the blessings, *first*, in the influence which this obedience to the law of Christian baptism exerts over the constitution and fellowship of the church;' [in admitting only assumed pious people!] *Secondly*, in the facility which it gives to the interpretation and use of sacred Scripture; [enabling them to see the harmony of their own immersion with the Word of God!] *Thirdly*, it leads to the promotion of personal holiness; [the dipped being pledged to live a very exemplary Christian life, which a Pedobaptist member is not!] *Fourthly*, in the acquisition and use of resources fitted for active exertion; [which are beyond the reach of all other people!] *Fifthly*, in the advancement of early piety; [securing better instruction than the young can get in Pedobaptist families!] *Sixthly*, it affords the very best means of confounding and resisting infidelity; [by exhibiting a more pure, a more highly intelligent, and a more consistent and useful society of saints than you can find any where else!] These are all the advantages the learned lecturer adduces, in praise and support of his own system, over that of the Independent, Wesleyan, or Presbyterian bodies! No wonder he is so energetic, eloquent, and sensitive, in the defence of baptizing only accredited believers!

The careful reader of the foregoing remarks in this section and, indeed, in those of several preceeding ones, will perceive that an essential difference exists between our opponents and ourselves, as to the ultimate design of baptism. *They regard it as chiefly retrospective, and we as chiefly prospective, in its*

*applications.* With them it is a sign, evidence, or *seal of a divine change which has already taken place*, or of spiritual blessings previously and actually obtained; being like phylacteries on their sleeves, announcing their present sanctity to the outer world! With us it is a sign, a token, or a teaching, of what should be effected in us, or of benefits to be conferred upon us. Carson says, 'Baptism supposes that all baptized persons are washed from sin through the belief of the truth.' p. 233. Consequently, all the immersed are to assume, that the great work of regeneration has been accomplished in their hearts. It imposes on them no obligations to seek the regeneration of their natures by the Spirit of God—though nearly half the dipped evince their need of it afterwards. It is fraught with no available or practicable instruction, and lays them under no additional claim to pray for the accomplishment of any future renovation of soul. The deed is done. You are born again. Live consistently with your past and present sacred condition. You were baptized by the Holy Ghost beforehand. Water-baptism unites 'the outward visible sign, 'with the inward spiritual grace previously given unto you'—as taught in our Anglican communion. Make yourselves easy and happy! You now exhibit the broad seal of your divine heirship. That this doctrine of baptism is fearfully delusive and dangerous, equally with that of Pusey and the Pope, I have asserted and shown before.

On the other hand, evangelical dissenting advocates of Pedobaptism view this service as *teaching what should be done in the baptized*, what renovation they are to seek, and what blessings they ought to pray for. You have received the sign, labour for the substance. You have had the type, employ the duly appointed means in order to obtain the antitype. They are not united as cause and effect. They are like preaching and conversion. You may hear the one, and yet not experience the other. As in circumcision, you may have that which is outward in the flesh, and not that which is inward in the heart. Now, if the above be a correct view of the chief difference between the Baptists and ourselves, it is plain and certain, that we are at issue on points of more vital importance than most persons generally suppose. Their system can do no real good, and may do immense mischief, to their converts; fostering spiritual pride, delusion, and false contentment; while ours cannot legitimately effect the least evil, and is calculated to accomplish essential benefits in the baptized.



In privately debating the subject under consideration, with Baptist ministers, we have found that, when having fully and confessedly met every other objection brought against our practice, they, at last, take refuge on the supposed non-advantage of our service. 'Pray tell us what good is it?' They assume, that on this question we must be dumb, or can speak only to our own confusion. Here, however, our reply is ready, if not always convincing, 'Much every way.' But, when we retort, and press the inquiry, 'what benefits do pious, 'intelligent, and long-trying Christians gain, by being immersed?' our opponents are thoroughly at a loss for even a plausible answer. Conscious of this difficulty, they are tempted to attribute benefits to their ceremonial little inferior to those ascribed to it by the open advocates of baptismal regeneration—as the citations previously made fully testify. It is this effort, to exalt their believers' immersion above baby-affusion, which has led them to make such unscriptural and injurious statements as I have repeatedly quoted. These are the results of polemical perplexities, or the progeny of an unconscious priestcraft—ascribing marvellous virtues to the ceremonious operation of their own clerical hands. These may be regarded as strong allegations against great and good men; but are they not as true as they are severe?

OBSERVATION I.—*The Commission of Christ contains the chief New Testament law, concerning Christian baptism and its benefits.*—Let it be observed, 'That there is in the 'New Testament no express command addressed to any living 'man or woman to be baptized, and no other command than 'that which is implied in his address to the apostles to 'administer baptism to any person whatsoever. Were this 'text obliterated from Scripture, we should have no direct 'authority for the administration of baptism.' *Halley*, pt. ii. p. 5. All besides, in the New Testament, relating to this ceremony, consists of records, allusions, and incidental remarks. It having been argued, that Matt. xxviii. 19, does not contain *the* institution of baptism; (which was given and practised long before); that the words of our Lord convey only a modified reinforcement of the ancient sacrament; and that, whereas the apostles and their predecessors had only been accustomed to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they were now to go into all the world; Mr. Tombes replies, 'If 'this be not the first institution of baptism, yet it is an 'institution, and the institution of baptism to the gentiles; 'and, therefore, the rule by which ministers are to baptize,

'there being no other institution that I know of to regulate our practice by, but such as is gathered from John Baptist and the apostles' practice and sayings.' *Exer.* p. 153. As this writer admits, the purport of the commission is just the greater extension of baptism to the gentile nations, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Hebrews had willingly received, circumcised, and baptized those that came to them and sought the benefits of the former economy. The apostles of Christ were to be aggressive, and to carry the gospel into all parts of the earth, and to baptize and teach every person they could induce to submit to their instruction and discipline. No fresh directions are given as to the age, sex, or character of the subjects, or as to the mode of its administration. These were to be gathered from the foregoing practice of John, as he had gathered his from the practice of the priests and his other Hebrew predecessors. So far Mr. Tombes accords with our views of this commission.

In this injunction Christ commands the apostles and all following ministers of the gospel, first, to proselyte, secondly, to baptize, and thirdly, to teach the doctrines, duties, and privileges of Christianity. The first does not necessarily include any verbal teaching at all. Whatever means enlisted people on the side of divine truth, fully answered their purpose. We have seen before, that many believed in Christ, not from what he or his disciples said, but from what they did. Miracles, with the loaves and fishes, probably, made many more—at least, temporary—adherents to Christ, than the simple ministry of the word. At most, there was no previous instruction beyond what was necessary to induce adults to become proselytes by baptism—a persuasion that Jesus was the Christ; or impressions favourable to the new dispensation of the cause of God. This being accomplished, the converts were baptized, and then initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, as much so as times and circumstances would permit.

To have effected a complete religious training and education *before* baptism, would have been impracticable, unless the doctrines, discipline, obligations, and privileges, or 'all things which Christ commanded his apostles,' had been understood by instinct, or in the course of an hour's audience—for frequently not much more time elapsed between the preaching of the truth, with signs following, and the administration of baptism to the hearers—and these hearers, too, mostly strangers whom the apostles had never seen, nor known anything about,

previously. The Saviour taught the multitudes generally, and in parables, of which few of them understood the precise import; but he afterwards explained the meaning of them, and the mysteries of his kingdom, to his more fully initiated followers in private. One thing is indisputable, that if the order of the commission had been observed in the case of children, they must, like the little Hebrews in the Red Sea, have been first baptized by the apostles, and then scripturally educated. To instruct children in the full knowledge of the gospel, before they are initiated by baptism, is not only to invert what appears to be the natural order of things; but it would be to postpone the rite to an indefinite distance.

Dr. Newman says, 'In the commission, we have teaching 'before baptism, and after it. The former is supposed to be 'general and elementary, including what is necessary to form 'the character of a disciple; the latter more copious—more 'in detail.' p. 14. Now, the commission does not literally or necessarily include a word about any teaching, properly so called, before baptism; but commands, that '*all* things' Christ commanded his disciples, should be taught afterwards. In the cases of some persons, preaching, and proving that Jesus was the Messiah, were necessary to induce the Jews to be baptized unto him. It was like proving the Scriptures to be divine, from its external evidences, and then unfolding its internal contents. But, many believed and, probably, were baptized, without any theological teaching at all. This previous announcing or, rather, persuading, was incidental, and not included in the injunction to the apostles—as if purposely to make disciples of infants, too young to be regularly taught; and just as infants, too young to understand the law, were circumcised to the Lord. Mr. Gibbs says, 'In the apostolic 'commission, there are *three things* enjoined—preaching, 'baptizing, and teaching; in the faithful discharge of which 'duties, the divine influence is promised to the end of the 'world.' p. 37. Even conceding that this view is correct, and was frequently exemplified; still, the question returns, In what did this primary preaching consist? Was it the whole counsel of God, or the grand truth, that Christ was the Messiah? The latter we affirm; and we think this position cannot be effectively controverted.

Conybeare and Howson observe, 'In ordinary cases the 'sole condition required for baptism was, that the persons to 'be baptized should acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, '“declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrec-

'tion from the dead." In this acknowledgment was virtually 'involved the readiness of the new converts to submit to the 'guidance of those whom Christ had appointed as the apostles 'and teachers of His Church; and we find they were subsequently instructed in the truths of Christianity, and were 'taught the true spiritual meaning of those ancient prophecies, 'which (if Jews), they had hitherto interpreted of a human 'conqueror and an earthly kingdom. This instruction, 'however, took place *after* baptism, not before it; and herein 'we remark a great and striking difference in the subsequent 'usages of the Church. For, not long after the time of the 'Apostles, the primitive practice in this respect was completely 'reversed; in all cases the convert was subjected to a long 'preliminary instruction before he was admitted to baptism, 'and, in some instances, the catechumen remained unbaptized 'till the hour of death; for thus he thought to escape the 'strictness of a Christian life, and fancied that a death-bed 'baptism would operate magically upon his spiritual condition, 'and ensure his salvation. The apostolic practice of immediate 'baptism, would, had it been retained, have guarded the Church 'from so baneful a superstition.' vol. i. p. 516. This view of the superstitious notions of many persons, subsequent to the times of the apostles, explains the reasons of certain cases of adult or deferred baptisms, to which our opponents exultingly refer us, in defence of their adult or believers' baptism in the present age. The same writers render Heb. vi. 2, 'Baptism, instruction, and laying on of hands;' adding, 'We take the punctuation sanctioned by Chrysostom. '....The *Didakes* was the *Catechetical Instruction* which, 'in the apostolic age, *followed* baptism.' vol. ii. p. 619.

Mr. Stovel divides and subdivides this commission into ten articles of instruction; and reproves Dr. Halley for taking, like Mr. Gibbs, these injunctions as the basis of his argument. In order to make up these ten articles, Mr. Stovel divides the first expression, 'Proselyte all nations,' into three parts.—'It has been shown that these instructions 'include three acts, which naturally precede baptism: to 'proclaim the glad tidings, to bear witness to their truth, 'and to make disciples. These instructions all imply, that 'faith comes by hearing, that faith justifies a man in becoming 'a disciple, and that such disciples must be made by teaching 'and testifying before they can be baptized.' p:235. Marvelous discovery! as if Dr. Halley had never understood that preaching and bearing witness to the truth constituted a part



of the means of proselytism! 'The next part of these 'instructions requires the apostles to baptize, or initiate, the 'disciples so made.' But can our good brother tell us, what act makes a disciple distinct from teaching, witnessing, and baptizing? What is done to the proselyte, or for him, or with him, or what is proclaimed concerning him, that constitutes him a disciple, separate from teaching or baptizing him?

Mr. Stovel had previously said, 'none were called disciples 'without being' [first] 'baptized.' p. 207. No person was to be 'recognized as a disciple, but by baptism.' p. 230. 'Baptism 'is the only badge of discipleship.' p. 221. Putting these passages together, it is manifest, that the commission gives our brethren some little trouble, in making it accord with their practice! If Mr. Stovel's meaning can be ascertained, from these hair-splittings, it is, that proclaiming the glad tidings, and bearing witness to the truth, inclines and prepares men to become disciples, and that they are formally made, or recognized, as such only, by being baptized. And if this be the case, his impeachment of Dr. Halley's judgment is groundless, and his analysis of the terms of the commission any thing but valid evidence against Infant Baptism. Mr. Stovel's aim seems to be to make a grand and fussy affair of baptism, as administered in his own persuasion!

On looking into this commission attentively, it is manifest, that its provisions are violated in nearly all the adult or believers' baptisms which take place in this country. In the case of grown-up heathen proselytes to Christianity, and of infants dedicated to Christ by baptism, you can easily comply with the terms of the law in this case made and provided. You make and recognize disciples by baptizing them, and then duly teach them. Here you observe order, and follow divine direction. But if you teach them the doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel first—as the advocates of adult baptism maintain you ought—and then baptize them, leaving little of moment for them to learn afterwards, you depart from the rule given in the commission. To contend, that the candidate must be taught at all the system of theology before he is baptized into the school of Christ, is just to place the question in a state of perplexity, as to how much divinity the person must acquire before his initiation, and how much he shall have to acquire subsequently. Nor can what is now understood by the baptism of fully-enlightened believers, be made to accord with the commission. When our opponents train up the young in the knowledge of the gospel, till they

understand the doctrines of salvation fully and clearly, and, perhaps, as well as the baptizer himself; and till they are spiritually renewed in their minds by the Spirit of the Lord; and then administer the rite to these young men or fathers in Christ; they cannot be said, by this ceremony, to dedicate or baptize persons unto the Saviour, at all in agreement with the law of the commission; for that, according to their practice, was done, possibly, twenty or thirty years before.

In fact, many of these people, previous to their baptism, have made an open profession of the gospel, have taught in sabbath-schools, have been employed in various offices of Christian effort. They have withstood temptation, have witnessed a good confession of their faith, knowledge, zeal, and love to Christ, before many witnesses. They have made a better, a more trustworthy, and impressive confession, than is ever made by the candidate at the baptistry—when ‘shivering on the brink, and fearing to launch away!’ or when exulting in the occasion of becoming the marked heroes or heroines of the hour! Now, to baptize these holy, adult, useful, and long recognized servants and friends of God, certainly is not according to the wording of the commission! Such persons are first Christianized by instruction, and hopefully regenerated by divine grace; and, when well taught, are initiated to the school of Christ by baptism! This scheme is evidently the reverse of that stated in this interesting and important direction, given to the disciples of Christ—which can be observed properly only in the case of children, or of recently converted and untaught heathens and Jews. In respect of these it was evidently given—as was circumcision of old; and in no case do the Scriptures offer us even a hint, that what our opponents understand by Christians—persons taught in the Word, and sanctified in heart by the Holy Spirit; having long made a profession of the gospel, been trained up by religious parents, and, for a long time, usefully employed in the work of the Lord—were ever baptized by the holy apostles. Children and heathens you can proselyte, baptize, and teach. But you cannot do so in the case of such as have been first taught by the Spirit, and fully instructed in the great leading truths of the gospel. If the commission had not reference to children and heathen or Jewish adults, it is all but a dead or an inapplicable law, in the economy of Christianity.

To reply, that our opponents would have baptized many of the adults they now immerse much sooner, had they applied for the rite, or been convinced of the necessity of it, leaves

our argument untouched. The qualifications demanded are the same, whether the person dipped be fifteen or fifty years old—whether he have been a real Christian one year or twenty, or whether he have been consecrated to God by affusion baptism in infancy, or in adult age. Till immersed, he is viewed denominationally as a Jew or a heathen; he is out of the pale of the true church; and, as a Jew or a heathen, he must be formally admitted. He must be really or professedly converted, must have learnt the doctrines of the gospel, and must be able to stand a good examination in theology, before he can be inducted to their fellowship by baptism. This is a procedure the reverse of that enjoined in the commission; nor can all the excuses, explanations, and reasonings, of our antagonists make them accord. *True Christian baptism is not the baptism of Christians*, fully taught the truth, and renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; *but it is a baptism of those that are without the pale of the gospel*—on account of their birth, and native pollution, or their lack of religious training, as Jews and heathens—into Christianity. This is manifestly the doctrine of our Lord's commission. The baptism of a pious and intelligent adult, from whom the rite had been ignorantly or sinfully withheld in infancy, and who desires to receive it before uniting with a Christian church of the Pedobaptist order, is a different affair—being an exception to its general custom, and an act imposed upon its members by the neglect of others. What we are opposing is, not the occasional baptizing of pious adults, but a systematical neglect of Infant Baptism, which may render the former proceeding requisite or desirable.

The parties most prone to oppose our conclusion on this point, avowedly lay the utmost stress on the arrangement of words in the New Testament, whenever they fancy it favorable to their own denominational views. We are repeatedly told—‘We must believe first, and be baptized afterwards,’ because such is indicated by the order of the words relating to baptism. ‘Teach and baptize,’ ‘believe and be baptized;’ (which, in the case of Jews and heathens, must be duly observed); are phrases reiterated almost without intermission or end. None, however enlightened or holy, may enter the particular ‘churches of consistent Baptists, or partake of the Lord's Supper among them, who have not first been immersed; because they read of persons being first baptized, and then added to the number of the professed followers of Christ. Well, then, we say, keep to the order of the words in the

commission, and about the meaning of which there can now be no difficulty. Proselyte, baptize, and teach; and we need require no more to sustain our positions in defence of Infant Baptism. Baptize the untaught, and instruct the baptized—this is the Saviour's plan.

But, our friends will find, that the order of words, about which they are often so confident and so eloquent, is not always a safe support of their believers' immersion. Of this they are apparently unconscious. We never hear them emphatically proclaiming, in their pulpits, such passages as the following:—'John did,' *first*, 'baptize in the wilderness, 'and,' *secondly*, 'preach the baptism of repentance.' Mark i. 4. 'Except a man be born,' *first*, 'of water and,' *secondly*, 'of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' John iii. 5. 'Ye are,' *first*, 'washed' (baptized), *secondly*, 'ye are sanctified,' *thirdly*, 'ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were 'baptized into his death.' Rom. vi. 3. Hence, they were not in Christ, nor in his death, before they were baptized, but only afterwards. 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Gal. iii. 27. Here Christ was put on after baptism, and in consequence of it. Surely, the order of words in these passages, and especially in our Lord's final commission, on apostolic duty—and, by consequence, the people's corresponding obligations—is as worthy of regard as any others found in the narratives of scripture baptism. The way in which our sagacious opponents endeavour to meet our rejoinder to their customary reasonings on this point, is by remarking, 'There is in words an order of emphasis, as well 'as an order of time.' *Noel*, p. 39. This is a very convenient discovery!

It will be seen, as before noticed, that, in this commission, our Lord had but just two leading obligations to unfold and inculcate on his disciples, first, that they should baptize, for the future, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, secondly, that they should extend these baptisms, beyond the Jews, to all the nations of the earth made willing to receive the rite. Their previous commission had been 'to the lost 'sheep of the house of Israel' only. Matt. x. 5, 6; and their baptizings, which, probably, they continued up to the time of our Saviour's death, and, under his own immediate eye and direction, had therefore been confined to the same people. But, now, their sphere of ministration was to be extended,



and their baptismal phraseology was to be altered. This was all they required to be told; and this, in all likelihood, is all our Lord intended to enjoin upon them. This commission, be it observed, says not a word about learning, or repentance, or faith, in the baptized; nor exacts any promises from the candidates; nor demands any resolutions of future piety, or devotedness to God. If these things were necessary, they were assumed to have been known to the apostles beforehand. They are not mentioned by our Lord. All he says is as appropriate to an infant as to an adult, if not more so—make them disciples by baptism, and then teach them the gospel of Christ.

It is highly probable, that some opponent may urge, that there is *Another Commission* on this subject, recorded in Mark xvi. 15-17, rendering personal faith prerequisite to baptism; and, consequently, precluding infants from a participation in this rite. 'And he said unto them, Go ye into 'all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He 'that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that 'believeth not shall be damned; and these signs shall follow 'them that believe,' &c. That this address was not delivered to the disciples at the same time nor in the same place with that recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, is certain. This was given while they sat at meat, and that on a mountain in Galilee. It seems likely it was spoken some weeks prior to the latter, and in quite a different and, probably, in a distant locality. Another opinion is, that it was delivered after the words recorded in Matthew. But that is very unlikely, and very immaterial. The prime question is, how would the disciples understand the language? If water-baptism were meant, our opponents contend it was to be by dipping, because, they say, proselyte baptism, among the Jews, was by dipping. As no specific directions were given respecting the *mode*; they will have it, we must go back to that ancient institution for our guidance. Well, then, in the same way, we must go back to proselyte Hebrew baptism, to learn the proper *subjects* of Christian baptism; seeing we have no more definite information on this head than on the other. 'As the baptized Jewish proselyte 'became, by Jewish baptism, entitled to all the Mosaic ordinances, 'so the baptized Christian proselyte becomes, by Christian 'baptism, the avowed disciple of Christ, entitled to all Christian 'ordinances. The Jewish baptism was intended for none but 'believers in Moses; the Christian baptism is intended for 'none but believers in Christ.' *Noel*, p. 49. It is, however,

certain, and Mr. Noel will not deny it, that, under the terms, 'believers in Moses,' infants were comprehended, and, as such, were baptized—ten thousand of them to every adult in Israel—and it is but just to conclude, that through this ancient use of the words, the apostles baptized 'believers in Christ,' and their seed. Without a fresh revelation, commanding them to understand the language differently, they could not reasonably do otherwise. If infants were baptized under the law, and if the same rule held good under the gospel, all infants in Christendom should be baptized also.

I remark, further, that the above quotation from Mark, contains no commission or command whatever to baptize any person, old or young; and from it alone the disciples could not have gathered, that it was their duty, or that of any other preachers of the gospel, to baptize at all; any more than they could have learnt it from John iii. 5, where a doctrine of parallel import was delivered by the Saviour to Nicodemus: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' This was no command to the Rabbi, nor to any one else, to go and baptize the people. Similar positive declarations are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;' 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;' 'He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already.' Here are statements, but no expressed relative commands; doctrines propounded, but no ministerial duties enjoined. And such is the manifest import of the passage in Mark. Mr. Evans was fully warranted in saying, 'that there is no positive command in Scripture to baptize *believers*, much less *believers only*.' Mr. Carson asserts that, 'The commission, as it is recorded by Mark, commands believers to be baptized.' p. 260. This is not correct. The language of our Lord commands nothing of the kind. It states a doctrine, and nothing more. Mr. Tombes justly observes, 'The truth is, Mark xvi. 16, is not a command, but an enunciation.' *Serm.* p. 157. The questions respecting the nature of the belief, the character of the subjects, the qualifications of the administrators, the form of the ceremony, and the words to be used on the occasion, are here left perfectly open, and must be answered from other parts of the sacred Scriptures, or not at all.

Again, the apostles must have inferred, that the baptism alluded to in Mark, was as essential to salvation as believing;

and that the lack of it would exclude both adults and children from the kingdom of heaven, as certainly as the want of faith in Christ Jesus. The apostles might readily understand, that their divine teacher referred to the spiritual regeneration, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The vital and saving importance attached to this baptism renders it evident that water-baptism, simply, could not be intended. This interpretation of the language is in perfect accordance with the tenor of divine truth, and removes every difficulty naturally felt, while viewing it as referring to water-baptism. At any rate, should it still be contended that water-baptism is really meant, then reference can be made only to adults, without implicating infants in any way or degree—seeing the passage would as literally and as effectually exclude them from heaven, for want of faith, as it would the veriest infidel in the country; for they are no more capable of believing or of disbelieving than of doing all the commandments of God. Of this fact our opponents appear to be conscious. Mr. Maclean, in his reply to the remarks of Mr. Glass on this text, admits, that ‘There is not one syllable in all that commission, either of,’ [or relating to] ‘the infants of believers or infidels, dying in infancy, or otherwise.’ *Lect.* iii. p. 18. And Mr. Tombes, in a passage before-cited, says, the text in question has absolutely nothing to do with children. Therefore, it can offer no conditions on which they can be rejected from the ordinance of baptism.

The language before us may be best understood, by inquiring into the practice of the apostles, and thence inferring, how it was viewed by them. Mr. Parsons observes, ‘Their conduct most decidedly shows, that they did not understand this text in the same sense as modern Baptists; for your denomination insist, that our Lord here speaks of’ [requiring] ‘saving faith; but, nothing is more evident, than that the apostles never waited even a moment, that the candidates for baptism might give substantial proofs of saving faith. They baptized persons the same hour—they baptized them for repentance, &c.—in a word, they baptized individuals who were in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; consequently, the apostles, who must have had as clear apprehension of this text, as any Baptist in our day, could not have understood it in the same manner as your denomination; for, if they did, they were guilty of a most wilful violation of the command of the King of Zion; and, if this latter sentiment must be admitted, then apostolic precedent,

'to which Mr. Waterman so confidently appeals, must be  
'destitute of all authority. And, sir, one of the two opinions  
'must be granted: either the apostles understood the text in  
'the same sense as modern Baptists, but violated it in their  
'practice; or else, they did not so understand it, and, conse-  
'quently, were not Baptists; and then the question to be  
'settled will be, who is in the right? inspired apostles, or  
'uninspired Baptists?' p. 65.

Mr. Isaacs, also, has a few remarks on the passage in question worthy of transcription. 'Our differing friends...insist, that to preach the gospel to every creature, means the same as to disciple all nations. (Matt. xxviii. 20). If this were true, all to whom our Lord preached the gospel were disciplined by it, but nobody believes this. Through the whole of John vi., and indeed, through the whole evangelical history, there is a marked distinction kept up between the multitudes who merely heard him preach, and the disciples. The preaching of the gospel is undoubtedly one means of inducing people to become disciples; but they must go further than hearing, or they will stop short of discipleship. Acts xiv. 21, we read—"And when they had preached the gospel to that city and had [*Matheteusantes*] disciplined many, they returned again to Lystra." 'If preaching the gospel and discipling mean the same thing, what tautology is here! That preaching of the gospel, which is prior to baptism, is supposed by the Baptists to be the teaching included in discipling. If so, this text might be read, "And when they had taught that city, and had taught many," &c., nothing can be plainer than that two distinct acts are here intended. Their preaching in this place was, no doubt, the same as in other places—it went to establish the heavenly mission of Jesus. The hearers, who were desirous of becoming Christians, would be disciplined to Christ by baptism, and instructed in the Christian system.' p. 97.

Dr. Byron, in a passage before quoted, referring to Mark xvi. 15, 16, says, 'Here we have the word "preach," and which word in the Greek is *Keruxate* from *Kerusso*, the literal rendering of which is to cry out aloud—to make publicly known—to proclaim—to promulgate—to announce openly—to call loudly upon; and there *Matheteusate*—which, rendered literally, signifies, "to make disciples of"—and *Keruxate* alike convey the preaching of the gospel in its fullest sense.' p. 21, 22. But the different terms used in Matthew and Mark indicate that they were employed



on different occasions. It is also clear, that in both cases, the idea of systematic 'teaching' of the gospel is excluded. We have a public proclamation, an open announcement, of the Messiahship of Christ, but no regular instruction, as the doctor teaches his pupils in his class-room, or as a minister teaches his regular congregation. If Mark throws any light on the language of Matthew, it is by telling us, that persons were to be prepared for discipleship by preaching the salvation of Christ—a fact which the practice of the apostles daily confirmed, and which no student of the Scriptures ever denies. And if Matthew throws any light on the language of Mark, it is by declaring, that baptism was designed to make disciples in their respective audiences; leaving their religious training to subsequent agencies.

Conybeare and Howson observe, that '*Kerussein* is to 'proclaim (as a herald), *Katangellien*, to declare tidings of ' (as a messenger),' vol. ii. p. 521. So that neither of them express the idea of regular and systematical training conveyed by the verb *Didaskein*, the word rendered 'to teach' in our Lord's commission. Mr. Stovel observes, that the meaning of the commission is, persuasion generally to become scholars in the school of Christianity. 'If the verb disciple be suffered 'to remain in the text, it must speak its own meaning, and 'enforce the action it describes, which is so to influence the 'parties named, that they may become disciples.' *Dis.* p. 238. Different means may be adopted to effect this object, as shown elsewhere. When he subjoins, 'that repentance and faith 'are essential to discipleship,' p. 239, he must intend, not an ordinary, but some special discipleship; or his assertion is manifestly erroneous. The fact is, to proselyte, according to the design of the commission, was simply to make people practically prefer Christianity to Judaism and heathenism; the precise measures for accomplishing it being, in a great degree, indeterminate.

It is worthy of further regard, that the instructions given to the baptized, in their social and congregational capacities, were much more particular and extended than were communicated to the unbaptized, or to the mere casual hearers of the truth. This accords with the design of the commission. That the apostles sometimes propounded great truths, in their first appeals to the people, we know; but the actual teaching or education of their initiated disciples was much more gradual, systematic, and minute, as in our Bible classes, or our ordinary pulpit ministrations. Take the epistles, sent especially to the

baptized congregations; and compare the contents of them with the sermons delivered at Jerusalem, and in other places, by Peter and his colleagues, in their efforts to proselyte Jews and heathens to Christianity. In those letters, the various duties and obligations of professors of Christianity are fully and specifically inculcated. All ranks and relationships are appealed to, and the claims of the gospel on them fully evolved. Masters and servants, rich and poor, husbands and wives, parents and children, rulers and subjects, ministers and people, the pious and unholy; all are addressed, warned, directed, reprov'd, encouraged, or comforted, as characters and occasions required. In the public discourses to the multitude, it is evident that such specific, practical, and minute advice and admonitions are not given. The doctrines of grace, man's depravity, helplessness, and the necessity of faith, love, zeal, and holiness, are explained and enforced on those who were 'within,' very differently from on those who were 'without.' 'The fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, 'long-suffering, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance;' are enumerated in an epistle, and not in any introductory discourses, on the value and verity of the gospel of Christ.

The fulness of their instructions may be further inferred from some of the concise records of the apostles' procedure. Thus we are told, that, at Antioch, when a great number had believed and turned unto the Lord, and, of course, were immediately baptized, the church at Jerusalem sent forth Barnabas to Antioch, who exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. And having afterwards found Paul, they assembled themselves a whole year with the church, and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Acts xi. 22-26. Paul 'by the space of three years 'ceased not to warn the' [baptized] 'Ephesians night and day 'with tears;' and, at parting, could say, 'I kept back nothing 'that was profitable unto you, but showed you, and taught 'you publicly, and from house to house. I take you to record 'this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I 'have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of 'God.' Acts xx. 20, &c. And at Rome, Paul 'dwelt two whole 'years in his own hired house, and received all that came in 'unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those 'things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, 'no man forbidding him.' Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

These passages are cited as specimens, or as indications how

the apostles attended to the commission given them by the Lord. They taught their baptized converts or disciples all that Christ commanded them—‘the whole counsel of God.’ This they were not ordered to do before the people were baptized. Indeed, from the haste with which they proceeded from conviction to baptism, the interim would not have admitted such building up of their converts in the knowledge, faith, and hope of the gospel. This they did afterwards, as time and opportunity offered. They proselyted before or in baptizing, and taught afterwards. So our Lord uttered various parables to the multitudes, and then explained them in private to his disciples—stating, ‘unto you it is given to know the mysteries ‘of the kingdom of God; but to others’ [the unbaptized, the uninitiated] ‘in parables; that seeing they might not see, and ‘hearing they might not understand,’—before being duly recognized as disciples. Luke viii. 10.

It is worthy of serious consideration, that our Lord’s commission as plainly and forcibly commands Christian ministers to baptize the proper subjects of this consecrating ordinance, throughout the world, and to the end of time, as to preach the gospel to all who will hear them. Hence, their voluntarily failing to perform the latter ritual duties would be as really an act of disobedience to God, as willingly to omit enunciating divine truth. That the apostles understood the commission in this sense, their after procedure fully evinces. They proselyted, baptized, and taught, the people—either personally or through the agency of others. They felt that these three acts were alike imperative; and, as such, they were duly and equally performed by themselves or by others, at their request—just as they served tables through the instrumentality of deacons. Proselyting, it is true, was the first, most difficult, and most important work allotted to our Lord’s apostles, especially at the beginning of the Christian dispensation. Yet, the baptizing and subsequent teaching were scrupulously observed by them or their assistants. Paul was sent chiefly to preach, and convert mankind to Christianity. That was his prime work. That he assiduously attended to. And though he personally baptized but comparatively few of his converts; yet, doubtless, he saw that all of them underwent the ceremony, through the instrumentality of others, and in compliance with the law of the great commission. To neglect either baptizing or teaching would now be as real, though not as fatal, a dereliction of duty, as omitting to preach Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is ground for supposing, with

Mr. Hall, that even 'Paul himself baptized multitudes of 'people,' though but few of them were Corinthians.

This view of the commission being admitted, it legitimately follows, that for converts to Christianity to be baptized, and for adult professors of it to have their families baptized also, are as much their correlative obligations, as to hear the preaching of the gospel, or to teach their young ones the holy and sacred doctrines, duties, and privileges of Christianity. If to neglect their obligations would be an act of disobedience in Christian ministers; then, by an inevitable inference, it follows, that for adults to refuse to attend the ministrations of divine truth, and for Christian heads of families to neglect the baptism of their households, must be equally a sinful neglect of God's imperative commandment—as much so as not to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If it be the duty of ministers to baptize a people, it is the duty of the people to be baptized. Admitting our premises, which most will readily do, this conclusion no reasonable man will dispute. Our Antibaptist friends would do well solemnly to consider this view of our Lord's final commission to his disciples, and their own corresponding duties arising out of it.

In fine, no person can carefully read the Scriptures without clearly perceiving the large space occupied in the religious operations of ministers, in their washings, purifications, or water-baptisms, from the time of Moses to the close of the sacred writings. John the Baptist made this ceremony a leading subject of his ministry—'The baptism which John 'preached.' Acts x. 37; and the chief ministration of his hands—'And were all baptized of him.' Mark i. 5. Hence his name. During our Lord's labours on earth, for the enlightenment of the people, his disciples were much engaged in baptizing the Hebrews. And, subsequently, baptism with water was one of the great businesses of the apostles and their assistants. Paul places the 'Doctrine of baptisms' in conjunction with the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Heb. vi. 2. Next to the performance of miracles and the gift of tongues, the ceremonial of baptism must have been the most *observable* act of the holy apostles. It must have been witnessed in every place where Jews and heathens were brought over to the Christian faith, and often upon a large scale. By it all were taught, that people must be purified before being received into the fraternity of the professedly sanctified followers of the Son of God. This rite we



know to have been continued all but universally and uninterruptedly to the present times; and it is now as binding as ever. It is still equally illustrative of the doctrine of Christ—teaching us also, that all his people should be holy, and that, in dedicating children to God, the latter should receive the sign of a personal sanctification. A service, occupying such a wide space, and being regarded with so much interest, during the first ages of the gospel economy, is not to be neglected now, without better reasons or motives than Antibaptists have yet adduced, or, I believe, than they can ever develope.

OBSERVATION II.—*The religious advantages often enjoyed by unbaptized children in no degree invalidates our doctrine.*—We do not, for a moment, question that thousands of children, who never received the rite of baptism, are much better taught in the truths of the gospel, than thousands who have been formally inducted to the school of Christianity. This is occasionally pleaded by our opponents. Mr. Gibbs remarks, ‘The baptism of believers possesses a positive significance, that it has a close relation to the external privileges of the church; but the sprinkling of infants among dissenters, as far as we can ascertain, is attended with neither external nor internal religious benefit.’ p. 16. ‘What are the peculiar benefits resulting to the children of Pedobaptist dissenters by virtue of this baptism? Those who were baptized by the apostles were admitted to the privileges of the church,’ [or congregation.] ‘Does this consequence follow the baptism of infants of dissenters? Certainly not. Are they holier than other children—are their understandings more enlightened, their wills better regulated? The many awful instances of degeneracy and depravity in children who have been duly baptized loudly answer, No!’ [just as loudly as the many awful instances of degeneracy and depravity in adults, who have been duly dipped, on a profession of repentance and a confession of faith, among Antipedobaptist dissenters, also answer, No!] *Ib.* p. 26.

Our brethren will have it, that during the first 200 years after Christ, all, or nearly all, professors of Christianity were Antipedobaptists, immersing adults, on the profession of faith, and the manifestation of spiritual regeneration. Surely, then, all the churches were pure, and all their members orthodox—when that great bane and curse of religion, infant sprinkling, according to our opponents, was either unknown or in a very incipient and uninfluential condition among them! Not a

bit of it. The faith of large portions of them was as erroneous, their discipline as defective, and their morals as inconsistent with the gospel, as if they had all been affused in babyhood! This assuredly was the fact, if the most reliable histories of those times give us any thing like a true account of the creeds and doings of those supposed Antipedobaptists!

Mr. Noel says, 'Infant Baptism is not of the slightest use 'to children. A regenerate child,' [like a regenerate man or 'woman], 'is just as safe without it, and an unregenerate 'child,' [like an unregenerate man or woman] 'is just as 'much in danger with it. It effects no change in children' [or adults]; 'it entails on them no new obligations, it admits 'them to no new means of instruction; and it adds little to the 'obligations laid on parents to train them up in the nurture 'and admonition of the Lord. It is, therefore, as useless as it 'is uncommanded and unauthorized.' *Mode*, p. 14. With a portion of these averments, we fully accord. But, with others of them, we are at issue. We contend, that baptism does effect a change in the child's relation to the church; that it increases its obligation; that it legitimately admits it to religious instruction; and that it adds much to the responsibilities of parents, to train up their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

To reply, that Baptist children are as well taught as others devoted to God in this ordinance, affords no just argument against our principle. Numerous adults, never dipped in baptism, are as holy and intelligent as those who duly undergo this ceremony. Besides, many people sit down at the Lord's table who ought not to be there—being destitute of the baptism and sanctification of the Holy Spirit, to qualify them for so spiritual and sacred a position. Many baptized children may be sadly neglected by their parents and by the church of Christ, and may be thereby deprived of their conditional rights—just as many duly immersed adults may be sadly neglected by their pastors and fellow worshippers. Many circumcised children, under the Abrahamic covenant, were, doubtless, left without the knowledge of the holy oracles, to which they were specially entitled by undergoing this rite. But, still their title remained the same. In the domestic circle, young persons may be deprived of the protection, care, food, and other comforts, which are justly their due; but, still their right to these blessings remains unaffected by it.

Again, persons may enjoy benefits from societies and institutions to which they have no fair claim. Instead of

entering the sheepfold by the door, they, like thieves and robbers, climb up some other way. Many are treated as friends of Christ, and brethren in the Lord, who are aliens in heart from the commonwealth of Israel. Many children, pertaining to Baptist families, may be as well trained without a formal dry dedication to God, as others are with it; and there are not a few adult members in Baptist churches, of the open-communion order, who have never been dipped, and yet are enjoying all its Christian privileges. But, will our opponents concede, that, therefore, this dedication and dipping ought not to be duly observed, or that, in those cases, these rites are totally useless? The real point in question is, whether the unbaptized are *scripturally* entitled to the same tuition, training, covenant-privileges, and standing, in a professedly religious communion, as the baptized; *or whether, in the arrangements made by Christ, the children, consecrated to him, should not have some advantages over those not so consecrated; as circumcised children had various advantages over the uncircumcised?*

One rule, in all other parallel cases, is, I believe, universally observed among mankind; that before people of any age, or place, or sex, or rank, can be rightly treated, as actual members of a well-organized fellowship or communion, they ought to be personally, properly, and officially, introduced to its obligations and advantages. And so, according to the order observed in the commission, children must first be baptized, and then taught the doctrines of Christ. Our brethren have repeatedly told us, there was a fair analogy between circumcision and baptism. And, if there be, surely, among other things, it consisted in certain advantages the young derived from them. Well, then, says Mr. Noel, 'Under the Mosaic economy, which was 'exclusive, circumcision *admitted the child* to the temple 'worship,' [when old enough to attend it,] 'to the teaching of 'the rabbins or priests, to the passover and other festivals, to 'association with the chosen people, to the use of all the means 'of instruction then in the world, from which the uncircumcised 'were excluded.' p. 282. Whether the ancient circumcision or baptism, or both, expressly conveyed these advantages; it is certain they were enjoyed by the true Israelite. We may, therefore, infer, that the introductory rite of the gospel confers nothing inferior to the introductory rite of the less perfect economy of the law, and that the unbaptized are canonically excluded from them. You will mark, that it was *a child*, and not an adult, Mr. Noel says, was introduced

to the above enumerated advantages. Consequently, *a child* may now be introduced, by baptism, to analogous privileges under the gospel economy, unless the nature of children is radically changed since the incarnation of Christ.

In the last citation but one from Mr. Noel, he opposes Infant Baptism, on the assumption of its conferring no advantage on children. This assumption I deny; and have shown it to be groundless. To be a little more minute on this point, may I not inquire, what advantage does an adult believer in Christ, previously baptized by affusion, well instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, and who, probably, for years has practically professed his love to Christ, by living a life of holiness and devotion to his cause, ever obtain by being immersed in the name of the adorable Trinity? He was as regenerate and as safe before this dipping as after it. It effected no change in his heart; and being, we will suppose, a member of a Pedobaptist society previously, none in his relation to the people of God—unless we are to be all denounced as antichristians. It entailed on him no new obligation; for he had before consecrated body, soul, and all he had, to the Redeemer. It did not entitle him to hear an extra sermon; secure to him better preaching; nor bring him nearer to God in spiritual fellowship. It was, therefore, practically useless. And unless our opponents can adduce better grounds for baptizing a Christian adult—a person already divinely renewed in his soul—than the supposed personal benefits of the individual, he has nothing at all upon which to rest his practice. A child, a heathen, and a Hebrew adult, legitimately reap great relative privileges from his baptismal consecration to Christ; while the converted and Christianized adult gets none whatever from being dipped under water.

We all admit, that the baptism of Jews and heathens, like every religious favour conferred on mankind, laid them under greater obligations to serve and devote themselves to God; and, therefore, tended to increase the heinousness of the sins subsequently committed by them. This, according to Mr. Stovel's reasonings, was the case respecting the rebellious Israelites, whose after criminality was aggravated by their extra obligations to holiness, submission, and zeal, arising from dedication to God and his cause, by circumcision and baptism. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.' Amos iii. 2. Hence, we infer, that Infant Baptism, as a divine privilege, like a religious education, is calculated to be a check to the



iniquitous propensities of the rising youth ; and a stimulus to obedience to that God to whom they have been baptized. Whether the beneficent results are always or frequently secured, in no measure effects the propriety of our conclusions. It comes under the too common category of neglected obligations, in the various relations of life. But where much is given, there much will be required. One point will be conceded to us, by all our candid antagonists, that Evangelical Pedobaptist Dissenters, do not pay less attention to the teaching and training up of their children than their opponents, because they have had them baptized. So that, as far as Christian instruction is concerned, their offspring lose nothing moral or religious by their dedication to Christ. And the heaviest charge an opponent can bring against Infant Baptism is, that it does some children little or no good—thus placing it on a par with that of an enlightened and pious believer's immersion.

Should the reader inquire, whether, with our views, we would afford religious instruction to children who have never been baptized, if brought to us for that sacred purpose ? we answer, yes, most assuredly ; especially, as the sinful neglect of this duty rests with the parents ; and the benefits, fairly arising from its administration, belong to the children, who are certainly free of all blame in the matter. We should feel it our duty to baptize them first, were we requested or permitted to do it ; but, if unable, our concern for their best interests would induce us to overlook this ritual defect, and almost any other, to further the important object of their religious education and ultimate salvation—just as we admit pious people, who have been only dipped, or not baptized at all, to the Lord's table ; though we believe a previous baptizing to be proper, and that dipping is not Scriptural baptism at all. In all such cases, mercy rejoices against judgment, and Christian charity triumphs over law. Even some of the most rigid and strictly-guarded Baptist churches do not hesitate to admit to their communion people whose nerves, or delicate health, prevent their immersion in cold, or even in warm, water. Some of these brethren believe in close communion ; yet, for what they deem sufficient reasons, suffer Pedobaptists, or unbaptized people, to commune with them at the Lord's table. Though not Aaronic priests, these people are allowed to eat the sacred shewbread of their Baptist sanctuary !

For such an apparent violation of evangelical ceremonial law, as in the case before us, we have the authority of Paul's

example. 'And he took Timothy, and circumcised him 'because of the Jews which were in those quarters.' Acts xvi. 3. 'Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews ; 'to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I 'might gain them that are under the law....To the weak 'became I as weak, that I might gain the weak ; I am made 'all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' 1 Cor. ix. 20, 22. For a long time God tolerated a plurality of wives, and divorcement, for other causes than fornication, because of the previous inveterate habits of the Hebrews, and the hardness of their hearts. Matt. xix. 3-9. The right initiation of the young, though important, is not vital ; and because parents have failed to perform their duty, it does not follow, that Christian ministers and people should not do the best in their power to secure the enlightenment and salvation of the young. We are not to do evil that good may come, on the one hand ; nor are we wilfully or lightly to neglect an opportunity of spiritual usefulness on the other.

But this concession to necessity, as the reader will readily perceive, in no measure violates or abandons the principle we have been advocating. The law of the Sabbath might be broken, when the claims of humanity required it ; and, in many cases, the laws of Heaven have, for the time and the occasion, relaxed their force and severity, when urgent necessity or even expediency demanded the concession. While, therefore, we should systematically teach the unbaptized child or adult the doctrines of the gospel, we should, at the same time, earnestly maintain, that they have no scriptural right to such theological instruction, till they have undergone this initiatory ordinance ; and that their parents have sinned, and are still sinning, at least, by omission, for neglecting or opposing this service to their offspring.

An Anonymous writer says, 'Baptism is a qualification 'necessary for all Christians, in order to their becoming 'members of the church' [or congregation] 'of Christ, and 'to their obtaining a right to the privileges and blessings of 'the Gospel covenant. This proposition is a direct and plain 'deduction from the foregoing ; for, as baptism was there 'shown to be the initiating ordinance of Christianity, and its 'design to be that of entering persons into the kingdom and 'church of Christ, so as thereby to become members of it, 'and entitled to its privileges, it is an evident consequence, 'that none can be such who are not admitted by this rite. 'This is the door of Christianity, and he who enters not in by

‘this, can have no other than a surreptitious claim to the  
 ‘Christian name, and the privileges and advantages of the  
 ‘Gospel dispensation. There is a manifest absurdity in  
 ‘supposing a person to be invested with any character or  
 ‘office, without such character or office having a beginning;  
 ‘and it can have no other beginning than that which is  
 ‘appropriated to its solemn investiture and admission. This,  
 ‘in the case before us, has been made to appear to be no  
 ‘other than baptism into the name and profession of Christ  
 ‘and his religion, which must therefore be indispensably  
 ‘necessary to all who would become his disciples, and be  
 ‘made partakers of his blessing.

‘Whatever advantages we have by Christ, we can expect  
 ‘only to have them in the way of his own appointment; and  
 ‘the way in which our Lord himself has appointed, to put us  
 ‘in a condition to receive the privileges of the Gospel covenant,  
 ‘is that of being admitted by the baptismal ordinance; the  
 ‘words of Christ’s commission are a strong proof of this,  
 ‘“Disciple all nations, baptizing them.” The Christian  
 ‘economy is the school of Christ, and the ceremony which he  
 ‘has ordained for the entrance and matriculation of scholars  
 ‘into his school, is their baptism. None, therefore, can be his  
 ‘true and regular disciples, unless they are introduced by  
 ‘this rite. Hereby they are devoted to his guidance and  
 ‘tuition, and are subjected to his direction and government;  
 ‘they become his subjects and servants, are enlisted into  
 ‘his service, enrolled under his banner, and bound to a sub-  
 ‘mission to his discipline. There can be no pretence to a  
 ‘title to Christ’s gracious protection and instruction without a  
 ‘compliance with the method which he has appointed for  
 ‘initiating and entering his followers into the possession of  
 ‘those privileges. The relations in which we stand to Christ,  
 ‘the duties we owe him, and the benefits we receive by him,  
 ‘have their primary and initial foundation in this ordinance,  
 ‘and, by consequence, it must be necessary for all Christians.’

As a set off against the remarks of Gibbs, Noel, and others,  
 on the alleged uselessness of Infant Baptism, I will here recite  
 the language of one of their own denomination, on the equal  
 uselessness of adult or believers’ baptism. “It is still, indeed,  
 ‘an ordinance of proselytism; but here, instead of being used  
 ‘in proselyting to Christianity, it proselytes to a particular  
 ‘sect of Christians. Hence, we have often witnessed, when a  
 ‘truly pious character, who, for a series of years, has made  
 ‘an honourable profession of religion, and even been eminently

‘useful as a preacher of the gospel, adopts these views of the ordinance, and acts accordingly, the general impression is, not that he is become a Christian, but that he is turned Baptist. His personal Christianity was previously too well established to need such evidence to support it. Baptism, in such cases, appears to answer no end whatever, except it be, to tell all whom it may concern, that he who was formerly a Churchman, an Independent, a Methodist, or a Quaker, is now a Baptist. Thus that ordinance, which was originally the distinguishing badge of Christianity, is become the mere badge of a sect, adopted to excite a sectarian spirit, and promote sectarian views. Now, we cannot persuade ourselves that baptism was ordained for any such purpose as this; least of all, that it was designed to furnish one particular sect with the arrogant claim of an exclusive right to sit down at the table of the Lord.” *Agnostos*, p. 96.

The reiterated assertion that Infant Baptism is unscriptural—founding it on the assumption that many unbaptized children are as religiously educated as members that undergo this rite—would apply with equal force against the immersion of adults; seeing that those who undergo no such ceremonial are confessedly as well instructed, and become as useful and holy as those that do. ‘If,’ says Mr. Parsons, ‘the fact that Baptists, albeit they never sprinkle their children, yet train them up in as godly a manner as those who do baptize them in infancy, is a valid evidence against administering that ordinance to babes; then the corresponding fact, that Pedobaptists, although they are never immersed, are as good Christians as the Baptists, is equal proof that the baptism of believers is altogether unnecessary. . . . If the Pedobaptist is as pious as his dipped brother, why plunge him, clothes and all, for a second, under the water, seeing he will not be a better man than he was before? If Baptists manage their children as well without solemnly dedicating them in this ordinance, so Pedobaptists are as devout and spiritual without immersion as their brethren are with it. Your argument then, sir, sweeps away Infant Baptism and adult baptism at the same time. You slay both parties with the same weapon, and become, as regards this ordinance, to all intents and purposes a Quaker!’ Our foregoing arguments and quotations have, I think, made it manifest that all duly baptized children are scripturally entitled to the especial instructions of the gospel, while others are not. Whether



baptized adults now secure any secret advantages which other professors of Christianity do not possess, I must leave it with our opponents to explain; I have never yet been able to discover them.

As the divine Author of our holy religion has ever had great moral and spiritual ends to accomplish in all the rites, ceremonies, and institutions, of his gracious word; we may fairly conclude, that he had the like in view when Infant Baptism was first appointed. Among other purposes, we believe God designed to oblige his churches—Mosaic and Christian—to take a deeper interest, and a more active part, in training up the rising race in the knowledge and love of Christ, and to feel bound, by additional motives, to accomplish this great work—one of the most important and interesting in the Church of God. Children, baptized and consecrated to the Saviour, and, hence, necessarily regarded as his heritage, pertaining to his kingdom, and spoken of as objects of his affection, must surely be viewed with a lively interest by his people, who should, therefore, redouble their diligence to bring them up for the service of Christ. Independent of this obligation, parental wisdom and kindness would do much, as in the case of many of our opponents. But baptism professedly enlists and binds the church itself to put forth all practicable efforts for children openly devoted to their own beloved Lord and Master, and to do what lies in their power to bring them up in his name and for his cause and glory. The dedicated little ones are formally and Scripturally placed also under the care of the congregation and its officers; and it is expected and required of them, (whether realized or not,) to train them up as little disciples in the school of Christ; who virtually says to his professed people, ‘Take these children and nurse them for me, and I will give you your wages.’ This introduction of the young to the seminary of the gospel, imposes a new, high, un mistakeable, and divine, duty on the teachers and their assistants occupied in guiding untutored minds to Christ. This, we deem, at least, a leading motive of the divine Being in instituting the introductory ordinance of infant baptismal dedication to God—an institution as important in its object, as simple and beautiful in its administration.

As a general principle of Scriptural interpretation, it is material to bear in mind, that *the practical purposes of all divinely instituted rites and ceremonies are chiefly prospective.* The theory of our opponents regards them principally as the reverse. As stated before, they make baptism a seal of what

has been effected, and not a sign of what is to be done. This is apparent from the previous statements and reasonings of Mr. Noel and his likeminded friends. But, it is clear, that even in cases where the antecedents are recognized, and constitute the ground of the ceremony, the benefits and practical effects of it are always subsequent, or to come. For example, the sacrifices were intended, typically, to take away sin, or to make the comers thereunto perfect, for the future. The sprinklings of the tabernacle and temple, and of all the vessels thereof, were not designed to show that they were previously holy, but to render them so afterwards. The Lord's Supper, while a memorial of the death of the Redeemer, was designed to show forth that awful and glorious event, and, by faith, to feed and refresh the people of God, for their future walk and warfare. Circumcision, while a seal of the covenant God made before with Abraham, was a token, or sign, or type, of the subsequent circumcision of the heart, and an introduction to blessings to be enjoyed by the descendants of the father of the faithful, in coming years. The baptism of the Spirit is not intended to bless and comfort the righteous, or to indicate that they had previously been spiritually holy; but to render them so in future.

Now, if water-baptism be not totally different from every other rite and ceremonial recorded in Scripture, its results must be prospective also. It is an initiation to a position we were not in before. It is a dedication to Christ, to whom we did not formally pertain before. It is introductory to the congregation or church of which we were not previously members. It is indicative, that we must be holy, which we were not before—not that we had been renewed by the Holy Spirit, but that we must be before we can enter heaven. Therefore, a scheme which runs counter to the entire tenor and genius of Scripture, as adult believers' baptism certainly does, must, to say the least of it, be viewed with very grave suspicions; and can be adopted only on the production of testimonies in its support, such as our opponents have never yet adduced. If there be an exception to the rule now referred to, of which I am not aware, we must look to our opponents for the production of it. Baptism, in the beginning of life, is certainly more in harmony with the Christian scheme than in the middle or near the end of it.

That ANTIBAPTISM itself receives no countenance from the New Testament, is to us, and to our Baptist opponents also, most indubitable. The plea, that the baptism of the Spirit is

the only baptism of the Gospel, is not sustained by an appeal to apostolic times or teachings. Water-baptism was administered by Stephen, Ananias, Peter, Paul, and, probably, by all the other apostles and their assistants, long after the day of Pentecost. And, if their practice is to be our pattern, it is to be administered in our day. There are no grounds for our making this rite, as administered by them, an exception to their other actions, designed to afford direction to all succeeding teachers of divine truth. We have no intimation that baptism was to be confined to the first age, any more than we have, that preaching, prayer, and Christian fellowship, were to be limited to that period. The Saviour's commission made water baptism as extensive and enduring as preaching the Gospel; and they must therefore be perpetually combined.

It is observable, that most of those who object to this ceremony, also object to the Lord's Supper, though enjoined by Christ on his disciples, and expressly sanctioned by Paul nearly thirty years after its institution; and, doubtless, was generally attended to in the churches of Christ. Indeed, these objectors perceive very little benefit obtainable from observing either of the Christian sacraments. As they cannot fancy people becoming wiser, stronger, holier, more useful, or happy, from attending to them; they consequently neglect them altogether, and everything like forms and rites in religion. Others of the like class go so far as even to imagine, that very little good is obtained from public worship, and the ordinary means of grace; and, therefore, attend them but seldom, or with but little interest, or only as examples to children and dependents, or, because it would be deemed irreligious or heathenish to neglect them altogether. They do not deny that such engagements are plainly enjoined on all; but they will obey God only or just as far as they can *see* the reason or the good of doing so!

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The substance of the foregoing remarks may indicate the grounds on which so many persons have opposed or neglected Christian baptism altogether. That the abuse or perversion of the ordinance has done much towards effecting this object, there is hardly a doubt. I believe adult baptism, in this country, originated chiefly in the abuse of infant baptism; and not in any convictions primarily based on the Word of God, declaring or intimating that it was unscriptural, or useless. When the practice of believers' baptism only was once adopted by the few, it spread among the many, to whom it appeared

plausible and reasonable ; and naturally was soon regarded as scriptural, and, as such, was earnestly and devoutly defended—as many other errors of a similar nature have been in every age of Christianity. But, the probability is, that in these times antibaptism has been more effectually occasioned and spread by the repeated counter averments of Baptists and Pedobaptists, and that the practices they severally oppose are attended with no religious advantages to their respective subjects. Disregarding baptism as an act of obedience to the laws of Christ, many persons simply look to the supposed benefits of the ceremony, as their only motive to submit to it themselves, or to have it practised on their children. Giving credit alternately to both contending parties, they arrive at the conclusion, that there is no profit in either baby or adult baptism. The consequence is, the rite is entirely overlooked, even by many persons who sincerely profess the Christian religion, and who deem themselves among the wisest, holiest, and most consistent of the disciples of Christ. The good of the institution they do not perceive ; and the laws of it they never carefully examine.

OBSERVATION III.—*We baptize children into our general churches ; our opponents baptize adults into their particular churches.*—We introduce our young ones, in the first place, to the *Ecclesia*, in its large sense ; they induct their people into the *Ecclesia* in its limited sense ; and both of us by baptism. This distinction constitutes a leading difference between our opponents and ourselves, respecting the right subjects of this ordinance. When I say, they baptize them into the special society of believers, I mean, that this is their usual practice, and that they do not deem any one spiritually and morally qualified for their baptism who is not, at the same time, qualified for full church membership. Noel : ‘The church of God now is composed of saints and faithful brethren, ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints.’ p. 14. The writer evidently means, not the congregation generally ; but the congregation in particular. On the other hand, when we baptize, it is into the general body of worshippers, or to the means and benefits of the training schools of the gospel. Against our scheme, it is impossible to discover anything, the tendency of which can be deemed delusive to the young, or offensive to Christian feeling. Into this relative position, with its means and ordinances of religious education and improvement, no one can legitimately enter, but through baptism. The offspring of the holiest parents are born out of



this society, and must be formally inducted into it, before they can be Scripturally entitled to its privileges. To belong to the body of disciples is not a relationship derived from nature; but through the wise and positive arrangements of divine grace and mercy.

Dr. Neander says, 'The application of the idea of the 'visible church, the distinction arises between the collective 'body of those in whom the appearance corresponds to what 'is internal,' [forming the inner circle of the Christian community,] 'and those who belong to the church in appearance, 'without having internally any part in it,' [constituting the outer circle of the professing disciples of Christ.] *Hist.* v. i. p. 493. 'The idea of the church of Christ is closely connected in the views of Paul with that of the kingdom of God. '....The kingdom of God was not first founded by Christianity as something entirely new, but the original kingdom of 'God, of which the ground-work already existed, was released 'from its limitation to a particular people and its symbolical 'garb.' *Ib.* 499. 'All who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah 'were baptized' [into this church or kingdom] 'without fuller 'instruction, such as in later times has preceded baptism.' *Ib.* p. 20. 'We are not justified in assuming that the 'three thousand who were converted in one day, became 'transformed at once into genuine Christians.' *Ib.* p. 22. These remarks, though here not precisely in their right position, give the sanction of a great name to certain points of interest previously advocated in our inquiry. The writer's views of the early church, embracing both real and nominal Christians; the similarity between the kingdom and church of God; and the baptism of persons giving no evidence of spiritual conversion to Christ—are given in the above concise quotations.

To proceed: children are not born into any conventional society, secular or sacred. They may early become members of Bible, Missionary, Tract, and other societies; but it is always by a formal introduction—a subscription paid, and their names enrolled among the pre-existing constituents. Through the payments made, in the children's names, by their parents or guardians, they are virtually and righteously constituted true members, equally with the largest and oldest supporters of these religious institutions. Circumcision presents a parallel case. The children of the most worthy, as well as the most worthless, Israelites must be inducted to the rights and privileges of the Abrahamic covenant, before they were

entitled to its full immunities. Under the Mosaic covenant, in the same way, proselytes, at least, must enter by baptism or ceremonial purification, or they could not pertain to it. And now no child can be regarded as a Scriptural member of the general church, or be a consistent disciple in the great school of the gospel, who is not duly initiated by the divinely appointed rite of baptism. This explains our view of the advantages of Infant Baptism; and the inference is, *that without undergoing this rite, no person, old or young, can Scripturally and properly be identified with the congregation of the Lord, nor be canonically entitled to its religious privileges.*

Against the supposed strictness of our doctrines on this point, our opponents, at any rate, cannot consistently demur. They admit no persons into their inner congregation or select church, as full members, who have not been dipped completely under water; though the operation to timid and delicate people may be, as we know it often is, a most formidable affair. Mr. Killingworth speaks the general sentiment of his denomination, when he says, 'I cannot allow those Christians to be 'members of the true visible church of Christ, who have 'never put on Christ by baptism,' that is, by immersion. See *Fleming's Int.* p. 7. If there be any exception to this rule, it arises from the surrender of a fundamental principle, for the purpose of sustaining denominational interests; or, they originate in the assumed erroneous opinions of a few of their less rigid or less orthodox brethren. Into the general church, as regular hearers and learners of gospel truth and duty, we admit all that apply for themselves and their families, by the ordinance of baptism; and that, too, administered so simply and delicately, that none can be deterred by any apprehended difficulty or danger in the operation. Hence, as before remarked, no grounds of complaint can lie against our plan, as being rigid or exclusive. As consistently might a man complain that he does not form a part of a religious or educational society, when he will not take the trouble to walk to the place of meeting, to solicit due accommodation, and to occupy a seat among the congregated audience. The assumed strictness of the terms, on which religious instruction may be consistently demanded for the young, are but in keeping with other regulations of the Word of God. It might have been deemed rigid, under the former economies, to deny uncircumcised males the advantages attached to the reception of that ceremony; or to keep the accidentally unclean out of the

Hebrew camp, or from the altar, or the passover, till they were purified; or to prevent the priest from ministering in the sanctuary till he had washed his hands and feet, at the laver of the temple. Many notoriously ungodly people might think it rigid in a Baptist brother, not to allow them to sit down at the Lord's table. The only question, worth a reply, is, what is the revealed will of God? Having discovered that, our duty is, fearlessly to perform it to the best of our ability.

SECTION NINTH.—*Many deeds done under the law may be righteously done also under the gospel.*—What was written aforetime was written for our learning; and, of course, for our direction in religious matters. 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' I say nothing here of the doctrines of revelation, nor of holiness of heart and life; for concerning the perpetuity of these, no Christian can cherish or tolerate a doubt. Nor, on the other hand, are we supposing, for a moment, that many acts, rules, rites, and institutions, imperative and appropriate under the former system of religion, were not done away on the establishment of the present economy; or were not rendered inappropriate and inoperative, either by the direct command of Christ, or of his apostles, or through the inapplicability of them to the altered circumstances at the reformed gospel church. I think it may be laid down as a safe rule in the present and in all parallel cases, *That whatever we find in the Old Testament, not manifestly abolished by the express or implied command of Christ or of his apostles; nor evidently consummated and terminated by Christ when he ascended to glory; nor became impracticable through the changes of place, and the alteration of human circumstances; is still in full force, and obligatory on all the people of God, in every age and nation of the earth.*

For example, the observance of our weekly rest, from ordinary labour, and for the purpose of holy convocations, never having been repealed by a divine command, nor having yet accomplished all its original purposes, nor being rendered impracticable in our time and country, is as binding on us now as it was on the Jews, when first distinctly announced on Sinai, and reiterated by divine injunctions subsequently to the giving of the law. The same may be predicated concerning erecting places of worship, preaching divine truth, praying to God, instructing

the young, and many other engagements and observances of the old dispensation, which are as obligatory on us now as they were on Israel formerly. Some of the ancient institutions have been modified, without being entirely done away; but in no degree have they been degraded in character or impaired in their usefulness. The change of the Sabbath, from the last to the first day of the week, and the appropriation of parts of the elements used at the passover, to the sacred supper of the Lord, are instances of this nature.

In this last class stands the rite in question. The ancient initiatory baptism has been subject to circumstantial alterations; while, in all its leading principles and purposes, it remains the same as of old. There is '*One Baptism*,' for all classes, ages, and countries—that of the Holy Spirit; and the ceremony, which symbolizes this divine influence on the mind, must preserve all its original and essential properties; or it would fail to accomplish its object; just as the '*One God*' must be worshipped essentially alike, in spirit and in truth, by all people, in every age of time; and just as the '*One Faith*' will sanctify and bless its genuine possessors in every place and part of the world's history. The baptism unto Moses, unto purification, and unto Israel, from the ranks of the heathen, was essentially the same baptism, as now administered unto Christ, unto his death, or unto the glorious Trinity—finally attaining its perfection in the noon-day glory of the gospel of our salvation. Water-baptism, most evidently, was not one of those things which were done away; nor will it be abrogated while the Lord's Supper remains; as both are designed to teach—to show faith, ocularly, and affectingly—the two great leading doctrines of revelation—redemption by the death of the Saviour, and the regeneration and sanctification of the soul by the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Stovel objects, 'Only let antecedent Jewish notions and practices be made the interpreters of Christian law, and it will not be easy to form an exaggerated statement of the evils which must ensue.... It assumes two facts the most discreditable to any one entrusted with supreme authority: first, that the authoritative communications of our Lord are not intelligible in themselves,' [supposing the reader ignorant of the Scriptures and practices of the preceding dispensation!] and, secondly, that their interpretation has been placed, as far as possible, beyond the reach of those who were required to obey them.' p. 49, 50. The fallacy, and, I might even add, the folly, of this impressive declamation has been already



shown. It is certain that our Lord and his disciples did employ the phraseology of the Old Testament in their speeches and writings, for the express purpose that their hearers and readers might better understand their meaning; and that they constantly illustrated their doctrines and declarations by recurring to the rites, observances, and ceremonials, practised under the law. This they felt to be essential in order to be understood by the Jews, who were the first hearers of the gospel, and who constituted for many years the first fellowships of the New Testament saints. Even sage law-makers, of our own day, are obliged to continue much of the well understood style of former legal phraseology, if they would readily enlighten the public as to their duty and privileges. We must teach people what they do not know through the medium of what they already comprehend.

As formerly remarked, our opponents must entertain serious suspicions about the Old Testament favouring their adult dipping, when they are so much against our consulting its pages, to assist us in ascertaining the will of God on this great question. Yet, it is remarkable, that they themselves often turn to the Old Testament for explanations of New Testament language and laws, and for information on almost every topic—save that of Infant Baptism. Even on this very subject Mr. Stovel himself refers to the baptism in the sea, as affording ‘a powerful confirmation of the whole doctrine of Christian baptism;’ ‘as affording examples to us....and as being full of the deepest solemnity!’ And Mr. Noel appeals to the baptisms under the Old Testament dispensation as the best, if not the exclusive, directory of the mode in which the rite should now be performed. The meaning of Mr. Stovel’s protest is only against our consulting the former economy in *defence* of Infant Baptism! That most of our Lord’s communications are intelligent in themselves to many godly, thoughtful, and inquiring readers of them, previously acquainted with the doctrines, ceremonies, and practices of the Old Testament, we fully grant. But that they are not all so ‘intelligent ‘in themselves’ to ignorant and illiterate persons, unacquainted with the preceding oracles of God, the continual expository references to Moses, and the Prophets, by our opponents—some of them expensively educated and paid for the purpose—is fully manifest and indisputably admitted. If the principle of the objection be valid, the books and lectures of Baptist authors on this question, at least, are wholly superfluous.

Some of our opponents talk as if we were depreciating or

almost degrading the New Testament when we recur to the Old for information on the subjects of baptism; but, might we not retort and ask, whether they are not undervaluing the latter, by denying its utility in settling the question, without referring to its inspired and venerable pages? Why should one Testament be independent of the other any more than the Epistles should be independent of the Gospels? or why should not half the sections in our brethren's books, published against Infant Baptism, be complete without the others? They might, with equal consistency, require us to confine ourselves to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, to sustain our views, to the exclusion of the Acts and all that follows; as to limit our investigations to the New Testament, to the neglect of the Old—while both, confessedly, treat of water-baptism, though not always, in precisely the same phraseology. To use Mr. Stovel's words, 'It will not be easy to form an exaggerated 'statement of the evils which must ensue,' from acting on the ideas which he and his party advocate in this case. That 'The authoritative communications of our Lord were 'intelligible in themselves,' as addressed to the Jews, conversant with the Old Testament institutions, is not questioned. But where has Christ personally and avowedly given us his whole mind on the matter under present consideration, irrespective of what was written aforetime for our learning? To suppose he has done so, is to base an assumption on grounds which cannot be sustained, as Mr. Stovel's own books, and those of his brethren, fully testify.

In support of our views, respecting the essential sameness of baptism, from the beginning till now, we adduce the authority of Paul in the text. He refers to the administration of baptism in the Red Sea—notwithstanding all the Saviour had personally said on the subject—without giving us the slightest intimation, that it had ever been abrogated, that its place had been supplied by any new ordinance, or that, in its leading properties, it had ever been changed. Both were evidently purifying rites; both inducted to the congregation of the professed disciples of Christ; and both laid the baptized under high religious obligations. He never even hints at the idea, that there should be the smallest alteration in the characters, or ages, or relationships, of their subjects, or in their covenant duties and privileges. He does not say, 'Though infants were baptized unto Moses, they must not 'now be baptized unto Christ.' He does not deal with this service as he does with sacrifices, the priesthood, and circum-

cision, which he pronounces, virtually, void and abrogated, in the new economy of the church. He speaks as if both baptizings were essentially alike; and the Corinthians must necessarily have understood him in this sense. In fact, they must have been remarkably skilful and hypercritical, could they have arrived at any other probable or passable conclusions from his unequivocal declarations.

Numberless facts place the perpetuity of the baptisms under the law beyond all doubt. Every baptism by John and the followers of Christ is a full confirmation of it. As Mr. Noel rightly remarks, they only did what the Jews, in case of purification or proselytism, had done before, and that constantly. We, therefore, feel justified, under existing circumstances, in regarding this Hebrew baptism, not only as rightly continued among Christians; but also as being, in its leading particulars, a directory to us how to administer this rite, and who are the proper subjects of it. With the unabrogated Old Testament in our hands, we should have felt warranted and bound to keep holy the sabbath day, to preach the truth, to admit females to Christian fellowship, and to promote the moral and spiritual good of mankind, had the gospel failed to afford us a line enforcing these ancient obligations—provided no intermediate commands from Heaven were given to prevent it. In like manner, the early Hebrew Christians, in all probability, would have been induced to baptize the people, converted to Christ, with their families, prior to their entering into the general fellowship of the gospel. The commission of Christ and the practice of the apostles, however, place that duty on a foundation that admits of no misunderstanding or passable evasion.

Before Infant or Adult Baptism, as administered among the Jews, can be successfully resisted, we must receive the clearest evidence, proving that Christ and his apostles purposely and positively put an end to its administration. Or, to confine the case to Infant Baptism, it must be shown, that, though children were baptized originally; yet that, after Christ came into the world, this honour and benefit were always to be denied them. We have adduced the baptism of millions of infants under the ancient economy of the church of God, as initiatory or consecrating rites. If, therefore, the practice is not to be continued, it rests entirely with our opponents to establish their exclusion—just as an adversary to keeping the ten commandments would have to prove that they were all annulled by Jesus Christ, and the observance of them rendered useless

or injurious under the gospel, before he could convince us that they were not to be kept as in ancient times. We give the authority of the Apostle of the Gentiles in support of our views; and our antagonists must prove that we have grossly or totally mistaken his meaning; or they must give us a greater name to override his inspired declarations and arguments; or they must show that many of their own remarks on this head are frivolous; and that the inferences we have drawn from the Bible are entirely invalid.

In further support of our proposition, I may again recur to the reasonings of Paul in his address to the Corinthians. In this you will plainly see, that he does not, in the least measure, abrogate baptism, nor modify its nature, nor speak of a new class of candidates; but, simply, as though he viewed the one to be properly the predecessor and pattern of the other. In effect, he says, 'The ancient Hebrews, of all ranks, classes, and ages, were baptized unto Moses; and yet many of them iniquitously violated their baptismal covenant, and perished under the wrath of God, in the wilderness. You also are a baptized people; see to it, that you do not fall into the like sin of unbelief. They all ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink; yet, after all, many of them transgressed and suffered. You have also received numerous advantages in religious means and mercies; take heed that you do not yield to temptation, and thereby experience the anger of the Lord in a like tragical manner. This interesting and important fact I wish to bring to your immediate attention, and by it to direct your minds, and to influence your hearts. I am desirous that the practical lessons it teaches should be carried into effect, and that you should perform your Christian duties all the better for the admonitions given you through the baptism in the sea, and the punishment many of the baptized subsequently endured.'

Whatever minor differences there might be between the administrations in the sea and in the city, there was a sufficient agreement in the modes, subjects, purposes, and extent, of both, to warrant the apostle in founding on it his argument against apostacy; and for encouraging believers, in the Corinthian congregation, to persevere in holiness and obedience to God. Of one thing we may feel confident, that had the subjects of baptism at Corinth been adults only, comprehending only genuine Christians; or had the mode been the entire dipping of persons; the reference of the apostle would have been quite irrelevant to his purpose, and would have required considerable



explanation among his readers, to lead them to infer that infants should be excluded from the ordinance. If our opponents think Paul's allusions were improper, too large, too limited, or too vague, to sustain his apparent positions, or rightly to guide the minds and operations of the Corinthian congregation, they must settle that difficulty with the venerable apostle himself—when they meet him in heaven.

When Paul refers the self-confident yet uncertain professors of the gospel at Corinth to the baptism and backsliding of the ancient Hebrews, he gave them two instructive and impressive lessons. *First*, that his allusion was appropriate to themselves, they having been also and likewise baptized. He might have pointed them to many other instances of blessings conferred on the Hebrews, and to their abuse of them, followed by most fearful punishments. But they would have wanted the similitude requisite to implicate their consciences and to inspire them with fear of falling after the same manner, through unbelief. Had he told them that Jehovah gave Israel a fertile country, gracious protection, great victories, and a splendid temple; and that by these they were laid under great obligations to love and serve him; they, not having received similar benefactions, would not have seen nor felt the force of his logic, at least, in any direct or powerful application of it. But, as both the Hebrews and the Corinthians had been baptized, benefitted, and obliged, in the same kind of ordinance; his reasonings were appropriate and conclusive. You have been dealt with alike; and, if you sin, you will likewise suffer for it. *Secondly*, That the baptism in the sea was a great covenant benefit to the Hebrews; that it laid them under the strongest obligations to love and serve God; and exposed them to severe punishments, in case they neglected or violated their corresponding duty. As the boon was great, the abuse of it became proportionately aggravated—as the judgments of God on the nation fully testified. Wherefore, the Corinthians would naturally conclude, that their own baptism was also a great bond, boon, and obligation—so great, that if they neglected or violated its claims on their profession and stedfastness, some great and fearful evils would befall them also. The entire scope of my text was adapted and, doubtless, designed to produce this moral and spiritual result in their hearts and conduct. The divine writer not only refers to the former economy for the instruction of his readers; but also forewarns them, from the same source, of the evils their apostasy would bring upon their souls.

Should it be still objected, that we go to the ceremonial law to understand and support what ought to be regarded as a purely Christian ordinance; I reply, as before, that initiatory baptism unto Moses was prior to the Levitical institutions; though subsequently, like circumcision, sacrifices, and the passover, it was incorporated with them. Hence, it may be fairly inferred, that the appendages and peculiarities of the Hebrew economy might have been removed, while circumcision, sacrifices, the passover, and baptism—all of a prior date—might have remained in their original condition—just as the ancient spiritual Abrahamic covenant remains in force to the present hour. Preaching, praying, praise, public worship, sabbath-sanctification, and the like, existed before the promulgation of the laws, statutes, and ordinances of Sinai, and the ceremonial precepts of Moses; the due observance of which has been continued since the abolition of all that was merely local and temporary in their laws and precepts.

Besides, we do not plead the baptism in the sea as our ground or authority for Christian baptism; but, we rather refer to it for the light which it throws on the proper subjects and mode of this New Testament sacrament. We have not read for our text the words of Moses, but those of Paul. We did not first hear of this baptismal rite in the sea from the writers of the ancient Covenant, but of the new; not from history, but from the apostolic exposition of a great preceding event. And this principle of interpreting the laws and practice of New Testament baptisms from Old Testament precedents, Mr. Noel and others have shown to be the proper method, if not our only one; as several foregoing extracts from their writings have rendered manifest.

Nor is the present a singular instance of learning the nature and purport of Old Testament deeds from New Testament writers. That the law was given by the disposition of angels, and that the bones of all the twelve patriarchs were buried in Shechem, we gather only from Stephen. That Michael the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses, and that Enoch prophesied of the Lord's coming, with ten thousand of his saints, Jude is our only inspired informant. That Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and that the names of the magicians, who contended with him, in the miraculous plagues of Egypt, were Jannes and Jambres, we learn only from the Apostle of the Gentiles. 'In this way,' says Dr. Alexander,

‘we become aware of the interesting facts, that the Creator of the universe was the Lord Jesus Christ; that it was he who guided the Israelites through the wilderness, and against whom they spake their rebellious murmurings; and that it was of his glory of which Isaiah had a vision, when he saw Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple. We also learn, by the same means, that the real tempter of our first parents was the devil, &c.’ *Cong. Lect.* p. 23.

Let it be observed, that we do not baptize either young or old merely because this was done under the law; but because we are commanded by Christ to do so under the gospel. In order to do it rightly, we listen to the language of the apostles, and observe, as closely and impartially as we can, how they performed this rite themselves, and who were the subjects of this ordinance in their day. And as they confessedly followed a prior practice in baptizing, as they did in numerous other matters, we examine the originals, and get from them all the information they afford us—making the Old Testament contributory to the explanation of the New, as we often make the New expository of the Old. As there were water-baptisms before Christ as well as after, surely we may look to both of them to ascertain, as well as we can, who were the proper subjects, and what was the right mode, aforesaid in order to conduct the service now in a proper manner. It is singular, and even amusing, that our opponents are frequently turning back to Moses and inquiring of the Rabbis, what is the *Mode* of baptism?—because they think, though erroneously, the answer is, Dipping; but we must not ask them a word about the *Subjects*—fearing the response might be, ‘Children as well as their parents were originally baptized.’

Paul says, in substance, all Our Fathers were actually and intentionally baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. The knowledge of the fact, that the Israelites *were actually and divinely baptized*, while crossing the sea, we derive exclusively from him. The subjects and mode of this baptism we gather from the records of the transaction to which he refers us. Paul tells us, there were divers baptisms under the law. He announces the facts. We go to the books of Moses to ascertain the nature of them. He tells us of sacrifices and oblations associated with the former covenant; and we turn to the Pentateuch to understand the particulars of them. Moreover, Paul refers to the Mosaic rites and ceremonials, in order to explain more clearly, fully, and

specifically to his Hebrew brethren, the character of Christian doctrines and privileges; just as ministers of all denominations now refer to the Old Testament, in order to teach more plainly the duties, obligations, and blessings of the New. The first gospel preachers and writers, for the most part, employ the terms and phraseology of Moses and the prophets. When Paul calls Christ our Passover, he refers to the great feast first kept just prior to the exodus from Egypt. When describing the death of Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, he alludes to the burnt offerings before and after the giving of the law. Many of the rites, rules, practices, and privileges of the gospel are explained and enforced by appeals to the former dispensations. Indeed, without a knowledge of those economies, much that Paul and his brethren wrote to the Jews would have been exceedingly obscure, if not quite unintelligible to us. The Old Testament was their text book, while unfolding and advocating the gospel of the Redeemer.

Our evangelical Baptist friends themselves frequently go to the ten commandments for direction in their religious and moral conduct. Their ministers often select texts from the Old Testament in which to preach gospel sermons. They refer to Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, to learn how to keep the Sabbath or Lord's day. They sing the sacred poetry of the Old Testament bards. They also laud the Bereans for bringing New Testament sermons, even when delivered by inspired preachers, to the test of Old Testament doctrines. Christ told the Jews to search the ancient Scriptures to learn his character and gracious purposes. Now, if men may properly and constantly recur to the ancient law and testimony for the better exposition and confirmation of evangelical truth, obligations, and privileges; why not for the explication of New Testament ceremonies? We only follow the course marked out by the apostle himself, who refers to the Old Testament act of baptism. We look at the subject he sets before us; we listen to his explanations; and, then, we learn who are the proper subjects of this rite, under the gospel dispensation, according to the judgment of this inspired man.

The dependence of Christians on Old Testament instructions and admonitions is manifest in an apartment of religious duty intimately connected with the matter in hand. That God has enjoined on his people the necessity of religiously educating their children, we all believe and know. But, where are the ample injunctions and directions found for doing it? Why, almost exclusively, in the writings of Moses and the prophets.



If I am not greatly mistaken, *one sentence only, directly enforcing the scriptural education of children*, is to be met with in all the New Testament ; and that, probably, taken from the Old. Prov. xxii. 6. ‘Bring them up in the nurture ‘and admonition of the Lord.’ Eph. vi. 4. And even here it is taken for granted, that the parents were to look to the ancient Scriptures for the precise mode of complying with Paul’s command. A few instances, alluding to youthful instruction, are noticed and commended ; but this is the only plain and positive precept, on this point, in the New Testament. Such a paucity of injunctions could not have been occasioned by any indifference of the Holy Spirit to the subject, in the apostolic age ; but must have originated in the fact, that the duty was well understood from the former Testament, which was supposed to be in the hands of the people ; or that its doctrines and duties were previously known to those addressed by our Lord and his apostles. In the like manner, no specific directions nor express commands are given by the writers of the New Testament respecting the purification or baptism of children, for this simple reason, that such ceremonies were regularly and scrupulously attended to, at least, by all the descendants of Abraham, and those who had been formerly proselyted to the laws of Moses.

We have just now hinted, that the baptism unto Moses was prior to the giving of the law, and the regular constitution of the Hebrew church. It may be worth noticing, that *all baptizings were introductory*, and that the parties baptized were always regarded as being previously without the circle, the system, or the society, into which this rite inducted them. All the newly-born Hebrews were out of the Mosaic church till they were baptized, and thereby inducted to it. All who subsequently rendered themselves unclean were deemed to be out of the pale of the sanctuary and the congregation, and remained there until reintroduced by the baptism of purification. All the heathen were without the pale of the Jewish church ; and could enter it only through baptism. In the days of John, all the people were viewed as without the interim dispensation he was proclaiming ; and they could enter it only by baptism. So, after the gospel was fully established, all nations, both Jews and gentiles, were without its confraternity, and could formally gain admission to it only by cleansing or baptism.

As among our opponents, none enter their particular or select society but through what they call baptism ; so no persons ever scripturally enter the general church or congregation

of professing Christians, except through the ordinance of baptism—the sign of their moral purification and consecration to Christ. This was God's door into his sacred sanctuary; this was his appointed ordinance—teaching us that we must be purified before we can legitimately join the religious fellowship of believers, or be reckoned as pertaining to the number of religious disciples—just as the *Perirranterion*, or vessel containing purifying water, was placed at the door of ancient heathen temples, that from it the worshippers might be sprinkled and sanctified before entering the consecrated buildings. No person was regarded as a proselyte to God's religion, either before or after the time of Christ, till he was ceremonially cleansed, or washed, or baptized. Baptism is God's initiatory rite to the external privileges of religion; but not to the particular and elect church of Christ. To enter this latter, a higher baptism must be administered, and greater qualifications obtained. As the tabernacle and temple of old had their outer and inner courts, for the gentiles, the Jews, and the priests; so converts enter the first court of the gospel-church by water-baptism, and the inner by the baptism of the Spirit, symbolized by the anointing with holy oil. Such being the case, it follows, that none, sincerely seeking water-baptism, can be too bad to obtain it, as introductory to the regular teachings referred to in our Lord's commission; and no children, designed by their parents to attend the school of the gospel, can be too young to undergo this initiatory rite; just as no person can be too unclean to be purified, nor too ignorant to be taught, nor too profligate to be reformed, nor too wicked to be forgiven. Christ came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance—to heal the sick, and not those that were already whole. This principle accords with the entire system of revealed religion; while the contrary symbolical practices of our opponents, are opposed to its benevolent spirit, and its beautifully harmonised arrangements. Indeed, their scheme manifestly wears the aspect of cleansing the clean, teaching the taught, and recovering the health of those who have no disease!

While referring to baptism, as designed to exhibit a consecration to God, through the emblem of physically cleansing the person, I must notice the opinion of a few strenuous, if not very intelligent, opponents of our doctrine on this head. They argue, that the design of baptism is to represent a modern burial, and not a washing—which two services are certainly most incompatible acts, with essentially different purposes. They refer us to Rom. vi. 4, where it is

said, 'We are buried with him by' [*dia*, through] 'baptism into' [*eis*, unto] 'death;' and to Col. ii. 12. 'Buried with' [*en*, in] 'him in baptism.' These expressions, they contend, plainly settle the point in their favour, or, at least, in defence of immersion. That their conclusions are erroneous, I have shown elsewhere, when discussing the *Mode* of Baptism; (2 *Ed.* p. 185-201); and in which it will be seen, that the apostle refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit—producing a virtual union between the believer and Christ, in the Saviour's death, burial, and resurrection; and making no reference whatever to the manner in which the rite in question was, or should be, administered. These objectors, probably, conclude that baptism, under the idea of a burial, is less congruous with that of infancy than of adult age; and, hence, they are influenced by a double motive, to cleave to and defend their interpretation of the above elliptical and figurative expressions of the apostle. But, in this result, they are manifestly unsupported by Scripture and primitive practice. For instance, let them turn to the Greek church, about which they talk so triumphantly, and they will find, that while babes are dipped, or, if you please, buried in baptism as well as affused; adults are simply affused or sprinkled. Our brethren, therefore, in reference at least to the subjects of this sacrament, gain nothing by shifting the figure from a font to a grave, from a dedication to a funeral service, or from a manual application of a purifying element to a solemn interment! That the idea of baptism, as an act of cleansing, is all but universal among our brethren, no student of the controversy will doubt—nor can it be supposed, that two such opposite purposes would be symbolized by the same ceremony.

I must not, in this place, fail to notice, that in the Lord's Supper, as Mr. Hall remarks, there is a doing away with a part of the Paschal feast, and the appropriation of a portion of its elements to a New Testament service. This, I presume, no one disputes or questions. We have not the perpetuation of the passover, as originally instituted, and for many centuries observed, by the Hebrew nation. No lamb is now to be slain, roasted, and eaten. But the bread and wine broken and poured out, and taken at the close of the feast, were to become a perpetual memorial of the sufferings and death of the Redeemer; and to be thankfully and joyfully received by his friends, to the end of time. In this sacrament we have respect to the atonement of Christ. We are therein to shew forth his death till he come the second time, without sin to

salvation. Here is an ancient rite, abridged, simplified, and perpetuated, in the Christian economy; having all the symbolical force of the original institution. In like manner, we have the purifications of the former system, stripped of their different appendages, simplified and continued in the present dispensation, to typify or symbolize the cleansing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit. We have the application of water in its easiest, most feasible, and delicate, form, to show forth the outpouring of divine influence on the souls of men. The day of atonement, and the day of pentecost, are recalled to our minds in the Eucharist, and in the ceremony of baptism; while the pardon of sin, and the renewing of the heart are plainly set before our outward senses.

It appears to have been the divine purpose to introduce into the New Testament dispensation, as few novelties as possible, consistent with its efficiency. We have nothing new in doctrine, faith, love, holiness, meekness, gentleness, goodness, nor, probably, in divine worship, as conducted in the ancient synagogue. 'When the preachers of the gospel addressed themselves to the Jewish mind, they never insisted on their reception of any truth, or their laying aside any practice, which they could not establish to them out of their own Scriptures.' *Gold and the Gospel*, p. 48. The great work effected by Christ and his apostles, in reforming the church of old, consisted in removing the types, abolishing sacrifices, destroying the temple services, &c., which were of no due significance after Christ came, and when the political theocracy of the Jews had terminated; and in shedding more light on what was previously obscure. The Eucharist was retained in the bread and wine; so was baptism, as an initiatory and purifying rite. In the former there was an abridgment; the painful and expensive were omitted. In the latter also there was an abridgment; the ministerial sprinkling was retained; while the bathing of the body, and the washing of the clothes, by the purified themselves, were not to be continued. The frequent ablutions for ceremonial defilement were done away, while the symbolical sanctification, which was introductory to the service and worship of God, was preserved to all coming ages. These sacraments stand in a perfectly analogous order. Both of them are preserved, both are simplified, both are rendered more feasible, and the design of both is made more manifest, if not more impressive, than under the law. The ancient yoke of rites, sacrifices, and services, formerly so burdensome, is made easy and



light under the gospel; while the significance of the latter system retains all its primitive instruction and power.

While the preceding view of the case, as between the passover and the Eucharist, plainly illustrates our doctrine; we think it is capable of even a still more striking exposition. It is a fact conceded by eminent theologians, and by some of our respectable opponents, that circumcision and baptism were simultaneously administered to the infant Israelites; and, though distinct symbolical acts, formed but one service. Now, as in the institution of the passover, a part was bloody and a part eucharistic; and, as under the gospel, the bloody sacrifice was abolished, and the cup of salvation was retained; so, in the ancient consecration of the young to God, a part of the service was bloody and painful, and a part was bloodless and painless; under the new economy, the bloody act was abolished, and the merely purifying was continued. This being true; the analogy between the abridgments of these two ancient sacraments is manifest. This view of the case will commend itself to the judgment, and readily secure the approval, at least, of all who believe with Mr. Tombes, that 'Baptism was a concomitant of circumcision, if not much 'ancienter;' or with Dr. Halley, that 'baptism and circumcision accompanied each other;' at least, in the case of male proselytes.

Supposing this point conceded, we can readily account for the motives which influenced the early Jewish converts to Christianity, to insist on their children being *both* circumcised and baptized; and why they complained that the children of the converted gentiles were only baptized into the Christian dispensation. They felt that this dedication of the latter to Jehovah was only half accomplished—and that the easy, simple, and painless part of it only was attended to. This may also account for the circumstance, that the baptism of the Hebrew infants, like their circumcision, was so little noted by the writers of the Old Testament. The service was so common, so constant, and so unostentatiously administered, as not, in general, to require a record, any more than when a babe was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in its own little crib!

SECTION TENTH.—*Many popular arguments brought against Pedobaptism equally apply to the system of our opponents.*—When we say 'popular arguments,' we mean such as are chiefly employed by the less intelligent lay advocates

of believers' baptism only; or by ministers—generally the least informed and candid among them—in addressing their own confiding hearers. And, when we say 'against Pedobaptism,' we mean, rather, against our mode of conducting this controversy, than against our views of the leading evidence and points at issue between them and ourselves. It is well known, that many of our zealous brethren advance various arguments in their ordinary discourses, and before their own acquiescing congregations and friends, which they would not venture to broach before intelligent, critical Pedobaptists. In private conversations, it is also known, that many assumptions, and positive dogmas, are advanced and defended by Baptist ministers, which the speakers would feel very reluctant to print, and submit to the ordeal of a public investigation. Yet, these observations, in certain circles, are the most efficient in perplexing, if not convincing, parties but little initiated into the matters and merits of this protracted controversy. But, it is remarkable, that the premises on which many of these gentlemen so much rely, for confirming their doubtful adherents, and for converting their less enlightened Pedobaptist neighbours, involve points and principles which equally tell against themselves and their own proceedings. The principal of these arguments I will now enumerate and plainly refute.

Before commencing these particulars, an observation or two may be admissible. The treatises published by our opponents, which contain the least reason, argument, and fair interpretation of Scripture, in opposition to Infant Baptism, are by far the most effective in making converts to, or confirming waverers in, the belief of exclusive adult immersion. Take the works of such writers as Crapps, Draper, Pengelly, and of the Leicester Tracts—which are mainly characterized by bold assertions, garbled quotations from unguarded Pedobaptists, perverted passages of Scripture, remarks strongly spiced with invectives, expressions of contempt, and pity for our ignorance and physical cowardice—and compare the results of them, upon a large class of ordinary readers, with the effect produced by the writings of such men, as Gill, Gibbs, Cox, Carson, and Rees—though by no means exempt from such dogmatisms—and it may be safely assumed, that where the latter make one convert, the former make a dozen. These are not only more numerous, but they are more of a clap-trap character—just adapted to lay hold on superficial and credulous minds.

Further, the works written in defence of Adult Immersion, by our more talented, intelligent, and candid opponents, invariably make the most important and damaging concessions to the cause of infant affusion baptism. The reader has only to review the many quotations previously given in this volume, from the writings of Hall, Noel, Stovel, Tombes, and their compeers, to arrive at the like conclusion. These concessions, it is true, are not of the entire doctrine of believers' baptism; but of facts, principles, and interpretations of the sacred Scriptures, without the resolute maintenance of which their system cannot long stand against the assaults of competent Pedobaptists. The character and amount of these damaging concessions may, in some measure, be learnt from our foregoing quotations.

Again, it is found that the most superficially instructed ministers and members of the Baptist body are far more dogmatical on the subject of baptism than their better informed co-religionists. Points which the latter yield, though reluctantly, the former maintain with confidence and unyielding pertinacity. Objections which wise and candid Immersionists have long since abandoned or conceded, these gentlemen reiterate and defend, with all their energy and perseverance, as if unquestioned and immutable propositions. Men who have hardly read a hundred pages on the controversy before us will frequently talk about it with a grandiloquence and assurance, seldom exemplified by their wiser and far more learned brethren, who have studied as many volumes. One has only to refer to the original Scriptures for the purpose of elucidating some point of difficulty or importance, to draw forth ardent condemnation for slighting our excellent version of God's blessed Word—by the literal sense of which people must be entirely directed—just as Mr. Stovel would confine our defence of Infant Baptism to the New Testament. And as to the admission of any emendation of the Greek text, if it happen to militate *against* their preconceived notions, respecting the mode or subjects of baptism; it is all but an unpardonable intermeddling with the pure oracles of heavenly truth! From such difficulties in debate one is, in a good degree, exempt, when arguing with intelligent and candid opponents. I have no doubt but most of my brethren, from experience, can fully corroborate the above averments.

ARGUMENT I.—*Different Pedobaptists adduce different grounds on which to establish Infant Baptism; therefore, it cannot be right.*—Some of them, it is said, refer us to the

Abrahamic covenant; some to circumcision; some to proselyte baptism; some to the purifications of the law; some to the baptism of households; some to our Lord's commission; some to Scripture consequences; some to primitive history; and now you urge the baptism in the Red Sea. Mr. Stovel is very strong on this head. 'Some rest the claim of infants, 'to that ordinance, on a forged analogy between it and the 'Abrahamic covenant; and thus the clear and beautiful light, 'which the whole Jewish dispensation was intended to throw 'over the gospel, is rendered not only obscure, but absolutely 'delusive. Others rest it on the idea of household baptism; 'and not only falsify the statements of Luke, but place them 'in direct opposition to those advanced by Paul. One 'advocate, as if in wanton boldness, denies the fact, that any 'believers' baptism ever existed in the first age; and thus 'he impeaches the character of the apostles themselves, and 'denies the whole record of the Acts of the Apostles. Striking 'out the leading idea of John's dispensation, they make the 'herald of Christ no better than a Pharisee. If their cause 'were good, their zeal were deserving of praise; but there is 'madness in this method of reasoning for what cannot be 'supported, which wearies the patience in describing it.' *Reg. Lect. iv. p. 24.*

It is, therefore, concluded, that all these parties and pleas indicate not simply a diversity, but even a contradiction, of principles and views, in defending our practice. But, surely, this variety of evidence can be no valid argument against Infant Baptism, nor against our modes of defending it; for, if so, the advocates of our Saviour's divinity and atonement would be in a most painful dilemma. The latter go to many more sources for information on that question, and in defence of their doctrines, than we do in support of our baptismal practice. Some preachers and writers lay more stress on one species of evidence, and some on others. But it does not follow, that they are at fatal issue among themselves. All real Pedobaptist writers are in favour of the rite in question, and all feel that they are contributing to its maintenance. The greater the variety of proof adducible in support of a proposition, the more, in general, is it deemed worthy of confidence. Some may see a good evidence in favour of their practice in one text or fact, which others may regard as feeble, or even totally irrelevant to the question—so various are the perceptive and reasoning faculties of the human mind. And yet all of them may still perceive in the Bible sufficient



to justify the rite of Infant Baptism against everything their adversaries can adduce in opposition to it.

But do not the advocates of exclusive adult or believers' baptism avail themselves of every variety of evidence, while labouring to maintain their doctrines and doings? Now they are appealing to Paul, and Peter, and John the Baptist; then the Rabbis are referred to, particularly in support of dipping their candidates; then the fathers and ecclesiastical history are summoned to give evidence in favour of adult immersion; then learned criticisms—the sense of Greek nouns, verbs, and prepositions—are paraded; and then the real or supposed concessions of Pedobaptists are arranged in long catalogues of quotations, in order to make baby-sprinklers contradict and beat themselves. Consequently, if our cause must be weak, through recurring to a variety of testimonies in its defence; their own cannot be deemed over strong, when they feel obliged to adduce such a variety of arguments in support of a different system! Yet, so far is a sincere Baptist from regarding their own various sources of testimony as an evil, that he exults over them as a manifest advantage—as so many pillars to prop his cause, or so many arrows in his quiver with which to conquer his adversaries. Some of our opponents, like ourselves, devote their attention to one part of the evidence, and some to another. This circumstance is far from evincing a weakness in their evidence; since, if valid, it only tends to confirm the faith of those who believe them. Who would not rather have ten arguments in favour of their doctrine than two? All we demand is, to build up our cause, if we can, with a like variety of materials. For our antagonists to object to this course is virtually to condemn themselves.

ARGUMENT II.—*Pedobaptists are at issue among themselves on the question of baptism—it must therefore be wrong.*—‘Are there not various, and even contradictory, views on baptism very prevalent among the advocates for infant sprinkling?’ *Draper*, p. 39. They tell us, in substance, you are not agreed, whether the children of parents, who are not members of some Christian church, should be baptized; or whether the offspring of people, not reputably moral and virtuous, should not be precluded from this ceremony; or whether you should baptize all who are brought to the sanctuary for that purpose. You differ as to the designation you give the ordinance—whether it be a token, sign, sacramental seal, or pledge of promised blessings, the exhibition of truth, or a

memorial of past events. Further, some of you sprinkle, and some of you pour water, in this rite. See *Gibbs*, p. 325-328. These are the chief variations among evangelical Pedobaptist nonconformists. That others attach the notion of saving grace to this rite, as they do equally to adult baptism, and administer it ceremoniously and superstitiously, absurdly and popishly, I freely admit. But, then, all of them agree, that Infant Baptism is Scriptural; or they would either not practice it, or not feel entitled to the designation of Pedobaptists. What perversion of mind to imagine, that these different views of this ordinance militate against its sacred origin and our sense of divine obligations respecting it! Have not the advocates and sincerest friends of Christianity disagreed about Christianity—about the nature, design, and results of the Lord's Supper? And have not the advocates of protestantism differed about protestantism? Yet, are not Christianity, protestantism, and the Lord's Supper, true, after all?

But will our antagonists subject their baptism to a like ordeal, and agree to renounce the rite of dipping adults, if all its advocates are found not to be of precisely the same mind concerning it? Do they not differ among themselves concerning proselyte baptism?—(*Gibbs* and *Noel*, to wit).—Do not the same writers differ from themselves in the same books? Of this fact, I think, I have given several confirmations in the preceding pages. Do they not differ about the value to be attached to the testimony of the Christian fathers on the question; the validity of the baptism of mere nominal professors; and the import of the verb *baptizo*? Some of them use single, and some trine immersion, the latter 'laying on of hands and prayer, while the recipient yet 'remains kneeling in the water.' Some of them regard baptism as the act of the church, and others simply as that of the minister. Some view it as introductory to the general church, and some to a select or particular fellowship. Some deem it an essential prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, while others are for open communion, or the admission of the unbaptized. Have our objectors never read of the controversies between John Bunyan and Mr. Paul, long since, and of Mr. Hall and Mr. Kinghorn, lately, on this last named topic? and of warm disputes among their predecessors, as to whether laymen might baptize as well as ministers?

Our opponents set us down as being all but papists and conformists, because, like them, we sprinkle infants; forgetting that, on a similar principle, we might set them down as

Antinomians, Arians, Socinians, and Mormonites; because, like themselves, many of those people practice adult immersion! As the state-religion and popery sanction adult baptism as well as infant, and immersion as well as sprinkling; we might classify them all as an adult-dipping fraternity, and charge our brethren with approving baptismal regeneration, and all the other evils of those parties, with as much justice and truth as they now blend us with them, because we all happen to affuse infants! In truth, I think the reader will find several statements, fairly quoted from the writings of some of our recent leading opponents, which indirectly, if not expressly, teach baptismal regeneration, all but as fully as the mass-book or the formularies of the state-worship. This is done while endeavouring to magnify their ordinance, to beat their antagonists, and to get reluctant people under water! Surely, all this tells as truly and powerfully against their principles and practices, as the various views of Pedobaptists do against Infant Baptism; and until all our opponents are entirely agreed on this question, their most prudent course will be to keep a profound silence respecting our immaterial diversities. Indeed, the Quakers and other Antibaptists might just as consistently say, to both Pedo and Antipedobaptists, 'Friends, when you are perfectly 'agreed among yourselves, you may consistently employ your 'arguments to induce us to embrace water-baptism; but, till 'then, the attempt would be ineffectual; and we must continue 'to cleave to the baptism of the Spirit only!

ARGUMENT III.—*Pedobaptists have made many important concessions to their opponents on the question of baptism,—therefore it cannot be sustained.*—The premises I admit to the fullest extent claimed by our antagonists. Some good men, of all persuasions—through lack of information, or through fear of being deemed bigoted, uncharitable, self-conceited, or severe—seem to do little else than make concessions. These gentlemen will surrender almost any secondary point for the sake of peace, and to appear amiable. Many, no doubt, surrender tenable positions, because they do not see their relevant importance, or understand how to defend them. Alas! what concessions have many ignorant, injudicious, and pliable Christians made to Infidels; many Protestants to Papists; many Dissenters to Conformists; many Trinitarians to Socinians; and many good men to bad ones! But this, in no degree, affects the genuine truth of the gospel; and should not, for a moment, override the judgment, or influence the

practice, of persons capable of forming an independent opinion on a controverted question. It is the duty of every man to 'prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.' If Christianity be not safe, till all Christians confessedly view it in the same light, and rightly and unanimously understand its various particulars, it will be a long while before we shall feel that our faith and hope are founded on a rock.

But have not our opponents also made many concessions to us, and these, too, on points as important as any they have received from us. They practically admit—however they may theoretically deny it—that dipping without faith, regeneration, or piety, is perfectly valid; since a man or woman, immersed while destitute of these graces, is deemed to have been rightly baptized, and that for life. This is a concession virtually sacrificing the entire doctrine of what they manifestly understand by believers' baptism. To this rule, I believe, they rarely ever produce an exception. They also frequently admit persons into their select societies, and to the table of the Lord, who have never had any other than Infant Baptism by affusion; thereby, either conceding the validity of this rite, for all social purposes, or giving up baptism entirely, as a prerequisite to full communion in Christian churches.

The thoughtful reader of the foregoing sheets cannot have failed to notice the many concessions, in matters of detail and argument, made by our most intelligent opponents; and some of these, too, of such a nature, and so manifestly vital, as to damage irretrievably every thing else advanced in defence of exclusive adult or believers' baptism. In fact, he must perceive certain passages, previously quoted from the works of Booth, Hall, Stovel, and particularly of Mr. Noel, in which they have entirely, though unconsciously or unintentionally, abandoned the ground on which many of their less intelligent brethren have chiefly built their scheme of exclusive adult believers' baptism, and on which the latter have long erected their batteries in opposition to the baptism of infants. They have gone so far, that all clear-sighted observers must perceive they cannot now honourably or safely retreat; and that they have nothing left, broad and firm enough, on which to rest any plausible, much less cogent, arguments in defence of their baptismal assumptions. While these facts remain, let not our good brethren contend, that we must be defending an unchristian service, because certain of its friends have made unwarrantable concessions concerning some of its evidences and ultimate designs.



ARGUMENT IV.—*Some of the greatest and best men in the world have opposed Infant Baptism—it must, therefore, be a bad thing.*—This objection weighs mightily with the mass of Baptist people; and I believe, too, with many Baptist ministers and gentlemen who, of themselves, evidently possess comparatively little information on the matters really at issue between them and their opponents. They oftener speak in the language of their teachers than in their own; and trust to the dictates of celebrated partizans, rather than to the results of their own investigations. They do not profess to understand much of the merits of the controversy; but they have great confidence in the judgments of such excellent men as Ryland, Hall, Carson, Cox, Noel, Stovel, Gale, Gill, Booth, Maclean, Stennett, Tombes, and of hosts besides—men of great piety, industry, and learning. Further, as we readily admit, that among the advocates of dipping adult believers only, there have been some of the most talented, eloquent, devout, and useful persons that have adorned and blessed the Christian church; our objectors cannot imagine, that those gentlemen, who have prayed for divine light on this question, have investigated the matter most diligently, and have carried out their views at the cost of high worldly positions, and many social comforts, could possibly have been mistaken. Indeed, they would deem it almost criminal to question the conclusions of such holy and worthy divines. I admit, that the masses of their people and many of their pastors, also, must, in most cases of literary criticisms, historical research, and, perhaps, of logical inductions, depend on others, whose talents, time, and means, enable them to look well into various recondite matters. But, still, a less valid objection could scarcely be brought against Infant Baptism. Had *all* great, learned, and good men, after praying for divine guidance and earnestly examining the subject, brought in a tolerably unanimous verdict on the question, and in favour of adult dipping only; then there might have been a plausible ground for acquiescing in their conclusions. But in the present case there is none.

What great and good men have there not been arrayed against each other on almost every question of theological interpretation? What pious, and learned, and able men have seen differently on the subject of Arminianism and the doctrines of grace; on the scriptural form of church government; on the extent of the atonement; on the interpretation of prophecy; and on the true import of numerous passages of the word of God? Now, all of them cannot be right;

and, consequently, some of them must be sadly in the wrong. Again, what numbers of great and good men have strenuously and most conscientiously advocated the Presbyterian form of church order and government, which Congregationalists do not deem scriptural; or the coercively sustained national worship, with all its peculiarities, which voluntaries do not approve; and the system of Popery, with all its errors and evils, which our brethren devoutly dislike, and so on, through all the differing and contending sects into which the avowed religion of Jesus Christ has been divided? All this is patent to every thoughtful observer. But is our religion, after all, made of wax or clay, to be melted or moulded into any form—either that of a dragon, griffin, or monster, as well as into that of a saint, a seraph, or an angel—just because men, great, wise, and good, differ materially about it?

But some man will say, when doctors disagree, what are their disciples to do? Why, just as well as they can; and, by pondering over the whole debate, form the fairest judgment in their power. They must, like the Bereans, bring the arguments adduced to the test of Scripture, and conclude in the fairest way they are able. The difficulty is admitted, and is felt on all sides of certain recondite questions, sacred, social, and scientific. But one thing no man should do; he should not take it as granted, that certain views are, and must be true, simply or chiefly because certain wise, holy, and sincere partizans maintain them. Look on the other side of the subject, in immediate controversy; what great, learned, and holy men, after fully and patiently investigating the points in dispute, have arrived at a conscientious conclusion, that Infant Baptism is perfectly agreeable to the revealed will of Christ? And, when their comparative numbers are taken into account, you will see, that this argument against Infant Baptism, founded on the judgment of other great and holy men, amounts to absolutely nothing. I admit, that the few may be right, and that the many may be in error—as a minority in the jury box, or in parliament, may judge most properly—but the usual conclusion is, that the majority is not always and necessarily wrong.

It is probable, that many Pedobaptists reason in support of Infant Baptism as their opponents do against it—from the great names which have supported, defended, and practised it. They cannot imagine, that such excellent, talented, and conscientious writers as Baxter, Owen, Henry, Williams, Wardlaw, Ewing, Edwards, Halley, Wilson, Taylor, Beecher,

Isaacs, and numbers beside, of equal intelligence and sincerity, can be mistaken; and that, therefore, the baptism of infants must surely be in accordance with the will of God. But, if a reliance on the bare opinions of others constitute the grounds on which to rest one's practice, it will avail little, when the wily and fervent advocates of the contrary opinion are arrayed against one; and when energetically assailed by the plausible and strongly pronounced sentiments of clever opponents. If the evidence and arguments adduced by the supporters of Infant Baptism have satisfied their judgments and armed them with weapons in defence of their practice; that is quite another affair, and stands widely apart from the influence and dogmas of the great and honourable names by which they are given. In truth, neither party can fairly or safely avail itself of the notion involved in the objection, with any material advantage to its cause, or any great credit to its own intellectual abilities. Though the talents, intelligence, and numbers, adopting and advocating one's distinctive views on this question, may be the ground of congratulation, they afford no argument worth a moment's consideration on either side. Many Baptists of this country often boast of the popularity of their creed and practice in the United States, as affording conclusive evidence, that they are exclusively in the right; yet they ought to be reminded, that full three out of every four of the ministers and professors of Christianity, even across the Atlantic, are practical and earnest Pedobaptists. See *Hinton's Voluntary Principle,* &c. p. 65.

It is a fact known to, and admitted by, most observing and reflecting persons, that, probably, in eight cases out of every ten, people, and even preachers also, are of their present religious opinions and parties from the mere accident of birth, early associations, or some trivial occurrence of life. It is not from any primary personal investigation of principles and enlightened convictions, that the sentiments they hold, and the professions they make, are now viewed and maintained as being most accordant with the will of the Almighty. People are Catholics or Protestants, Churchmen or Dissenters, Wesleyans or Congregationalists, Quakers or Socinians, Baptists or Pedobaptists, chiefly because their parents were so before them, or because they were brought into a favorable connexion with such a particular section of religionists. The opinions thus imbibed, by a kind of inheritance, casual association, or personal attachments, many feel disposed to defend to the fullest extent of their power, and to the last day

of their lives. They would even deem it cowardice, apostacy, and dishonorable to their party, to abandon a fraction of their former profession or creed, even though convinced that it is not indubitably sustained by the word of God. They are unconsciously biassed to a purblind contemplation of what is advanced adverse to their own sectarian opinions. Their readings, hearings, and meditations are all designed to justify their first adopted views; and to meet and refute whatever is opposed to them. Hence, they seldom give conflicting doctrines or practices a candid hearing, or allow them due weight in their own judgment. The churchman sees little or no force in what the dissenter advances; and the latter just returns the compliment. In general, the Baptist sees nothing of interest or moment in the statements and arguments of a Pedobaptist; who, on the other hand, is, probably, quite as insensible to all the former advances in favour of adult immersion. In truth, few of us are what we profess to be, from a primary, personal, and intelligent examination of principles, but rather from accidental circumstances—a fact which should admonish us all to strive against a blind prejudice, and to consider fairly what may be said in opposition to our notions, as well as in favour of them.

ARGUMENT V.—*Infant Baptism requires a vast deal of inquiry, criticism, and logic, to defend it.*—It is thence inferred, that it cannot be agreeable to the will of God; for, otherwise, it would have been rendered plain, as Mr. Booth remarks, even to the ordinary ploughman. Gibbs says, ‘It is manifest from the mode of defence adopted by the advocates of this theory’—[Infant Baptism]—‘that it can be only made to appear plausible by a laborious process of moral reasoning and by inferences drawn from remote premises.’ p. 230. This, like the foregoing objections, is founded either on ignorance of the nature of the controversy, as conducted since the time of the Reformation; or on a want of consideration respecting the points in dispute. Can the objector be really unacquainted with the fact, that the dipping of adults has been advocated and defended in volumes, pamphlets, and tracts, almost countless in numbers, and as elaborate, inferential, and critical, as any written in support of infant sprinkling? This, being known to all persons, versed in the writings of our opponents; must it, *therefore*, follow, that dipping regenerated and well-taught adults only cannot be agreeable to the will of God. If it be so plain, that the unlettered peasant may readily discover it to be the only scriptural way;



then all this preaching and book-making on the subject would be entirely superfluous. If the above species of reasoning really militated against the baptism of infants; it would tell equally against immersing none but Christian adults.

By the way, let our opponents only point out one passage in God's Word, clear, plain, and unequivocal, stating, that no children were to be baptized by Christian ministers, as they had been from the time of Moses to that of John; that only men and women, duly taught the truths of the gospel—the sincere, the regenerate, and the holy—were to be baptized; and undoubtedly proving, that the original mode of baptism was always and only by putting the subjects entirely under water—then the controversy would soon be at an end. In fact, with such unequivocal evidences in the Word of God, against baby-sprinkling, however concisely stated, Pedobaptists would never have had a being in Christian communions. We affuse infants, because our good brethren have never shown us, that it was not in perfect accordance with the revealed will of God. They have never produced such a plain passage as above required; and all their reasonings from others appear to us defective, and totally inconclusive on these subjects. Hence, we pursue our present system of baptizing. They, doubtless, deem us very perverse or stupid; but the real fact is, as I have just now stated. Respecting the cause of it, they must form their own opinions.

Moreover, the like species of argument would equally apply to all other matters of theological controversy. Numerous works, of the most elaborate and critical nature, have been published in defence of the divinity of Christ, his atonement for sin, the personality and work of the Spirit; the inspiration of the Bible, and its sufficiency as a complete guide to holiness and heaven; and, indeed, in defence of almost every other glorious and cardinal doctrine of revelation. But does this circumstance ever suggest to the mind of a sincere evangelical protestant, that, because so much learned labour has been employed in the maintenance of these great truths, therefore, they cannot be plainly made out from Scripture? Or, must a suspicion hang over the averments of their divinity? It only proves, that the opponents of these doctrines have been numerous, erudite, and persevering. That so many recondite and lengthy defences of Infant Baptism have appeared, only proves that much has been written against it—as there has been against almost every other doctrine, rite, and duty of

divine revelation; and not that, consequently, it must be opposed to the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures.

ARGUMENT VI.—*You take more pains in defending Infant Baptism than the rite is really worth.*—To them, it is much ado about nothing. The baby we baptize is such a tiny creature; its eyes are scarcely open; it hears nothing of all the minister says; and the people around get no recognition from it. And, then, so little water is sprinkled over it; the words pronounced on the occasion are so few; and the time occupied in the ceremony is so brief, that it seems hardly worth doing. Whereas, on the other hand—to be a little descriptive—when a man of six feet, or a woman nearly as tall, is to be immersed, it presents an occasion of some manifest importance. There is a previous examination by the minister, and, perhaps, too, before the church. Suitable male and female bathing attire is made for the solemn and ceremonious occasion; and then public notice is given of the coming event. In the meantime, pumps, or buckets, are employed, probably, half the preceding night, to get ‘much water’ for the operation; and occasionally a few buckets of hot are got ready to be slyly thrown into the ‘sacred flood.’ Then the candidates are attended in the vestry by deacons or deaconesses to aid them in stripping and dressing for the dipping—as bridegrooms and brides are provided for a wedding. Then they solemnly walk to the water’s side; the people look over the galleries; and the choir sings an encouraging hymn, to a lively tune. Then the minister and the party go ‘down into ‘the water’—and the latter are plunged backward under the ‘sanctifying element.’ Then the baptizer lifts the baptized on their legs in the ‘sacred pool,’ who then step ‘up out of ‘the water,’ walk off to the vestry, unrobe, wipe themselves dry, put on their usual apparel, hang up the wet to drain, and, perhaps, take a glass of wine or warm spirits and water, to prevent a chill. They are then regarded as duly initiated disciples of Christ; receive the right hand of fellowship, and are recognized as dear Christian brothers or sisters in Christ. Now, it is not surprising that an opponent, conversant with such a grand and bustling service as this, should think little of baby-sprinkling, and deem it hardly worth doing, or defending, in a large book of several hundred pages.

But let the objector now turn to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and he will see, that this might also be described as a very small matter—eating a little morsel of bread and

drinking a tiny sup of wine—quite as simple as sprinkling a few drops of water on a baby's forehead. Nor did infant circumcision present any deed very sublime and imposing. Under the law, the priest or the clean person sprinkling the unclean, with a bunch of hyssop, or with a little water from the tips of their fingers, apparently performed a very trivial operation; yet we all know the results were of great import and of vast moment to the subjects acted upon. As previously remarked, it is not the quantity of the element used, nor the imposing ceremonial of a rite, that gives it significance and importance. A babe is as immortal as an adult; and, though just come into the world, is of much more promising utility to the cause of truth than an old man, soon to go out of it. It has the elements of intelligence, vigour, and greatness; and may be the medium of teaching momentous truth, as much so as a proselyted heathen prince. Observe, our Lord did not take a big godly man by the hand, or even a stout chubby boy or girl on his knee; but a little child or infant in his arms, through the medium of which to teach his disciples Christian humility.

We know how deep an interest the Saviour, his disciples, and other good and wise men and women of old, took in the young—in their piety, education, and ultimate salvation. Surely, then, the great concern we take in defending what we believe to be *their* rights, and in the defence of what we regard as the duty of the Christian church towards them, must not be viewed as about a slight affair, though the act of their dedication to God be concise, and the elements employed—like those of the Lord's Supper—are materially inconsiderable. Baptist parents do not talk of their little ones as insignificant in nature, nor look upon them as trifling things, when they dedicate them to God, by supplication and prayer; nor do they think it a small matter when they commence training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If any sin can be fairly laid to the charge of religious people, in respect of infants, it is, after all, that they think too little of them, and are too listless in conveying to their minds the knowledge of divine truth, according to their baptismal claims.

Further, if we are supposed to expend too much time, thought, and money, in defending what our opponents deem an insignificant rite; do they not equally devote too much zeal, labour, and cash, in opposing it? Thousands of sermons are preached every year against this service. Books and tracts by cart-loads are circulated—for the most part, quietly

and privately—among the lower classes, warning them against practising or countenancing such a service. All the stronger passions of Baptist bosoms are roused into action against baby-sprinkling. Neither the diminutive size of the subjects, nor the simplicity of the ceremony, is now taken into calculation. The evil, it seems, is very great—though the babies are ever so small—and is deemed worthy of all the means they can employ for its prevention. I think it may be safely assumed, that though the Wesleyan and Independent bodies, in this country, are probably six times as large as the Baptist denominations; where the two former preach one sermon in defence of Infant Baptism, the latter deliver twenty against it. Indeed, it is the stock in trade of many proselyting Baptist ministers; and they are most diligent in displaying and disposing of their commodity. If there be any fuss, bustle, or contention, about baby-sprinkling, the Baptists directly make it, or mainly cause it to be made by others.

Viewing the case in perfect contrast to themselves, surely we may consistently defend our practice with as much zeal as they display in opposing it! If they deem their labours worthily employed against baby-sprinkling; they cannot fairly deem ours frivolously bestowed in defending our convictions and procedure on the question. If our battlements are regarded as worthy of so much assault by our antagonists, they will naturally be viewed as entitled to strenuous defence by ourselves. The subject need not be considered of less importance on our side than on theirs. Let them cease the attack, and we shall soon cease the defence. How much more the dipping of men and women is worthy of all the expositions and defences of our brethren, than Infant Baptism is entitled to ours; will be determined differently, as parties view these rites and services to be either Scriptural or of mere human dictation.

The foregoing remarks remind one of certain *Pedobaptists*, both ministers and people, who appear to make very light of this initiatory sacrament. They will not oppose it, they will not defend it; yet, as it is customary, they regularly practise it. Now, the truth really is, these people have never examined much into the question; and know little about it. They assume, that ‘had it been a matter of moment, ‘they should have received direct, ample, and explicit ‘instruction from God, as to both its mode and subjects.’ To them the matter is all in a maze; and they wonder how many learned and intelligent pastors and their flocks can



take so much pains about it. This indifference, however, is manifestly based on their inattention to the merits of the question. What men view confusedly, they feel unimpressively, or not at all. Hence, they make light of it, as well as of many other uninvestigated matters. They have no distinct idea on the subject; and, therefore, are little affected or influenced by it. They feel surprised it should occupy so much of other people's thought, labour, and time. On some other points, equally obscure, ritual, and unimportant, they are most strenuous, anxious, and resolute. But, then, they have examined them; have formed a distinct idea about them, and believe them to be divine. Now, till this be the case on the subjects and modes of baptism also, their notions concerning this rite will be both vague and evanescent. Unprepared to sustain their avowed doctrine and practice against clever antagonists, they seek refuge in the common plea, that it is not worth their grave investigation. In fact, you may take it for granted, that whenever you meet with Pedobaptists treating this question as one not worthy of an earnest defence, you may rest assured they are quite at sea respecting it. They are like ignorant politicians who care nothing about politics; or like unread persons who care little about literature; or like unmusical brains who think little about chants or anthems. What we religiously practise, in obedience to divine law or inspired intimations, we ought to be willing to defend to the utmost of our ability.

ARGUMENT VII.—*Pedobaptists found their doctrine of Infant Baptism on a very contracted basis.*—This and a preceding objection may appear at variance; but we will assume they come from different quarters. Some of our opponents would require of us not simply a few texts, but even the amount of several chapters, on which to support our practice. This charge will probably be brought against the writer of the present discussion, as having made one short sentence, in Paul's letter to the congregation at Corinth, the textual ground of his arguments in defence of Infant Baptism. This, however, is not precisely a full view of the subject. Though he has taken the apostle's language to the Corinthians as the basis of his dissertation; he has frequently referred to other parts of the Word of God, as explaining and corroborating his views of that important passage. He might have taken several other foundation passages, and adduced the present, in explanation and confirmation of the same doctrine.

For reasons previously assigned, he preferred Paul's allusion

to any other expressions the New Testament afforded him, as the principal basis of his subsequent reasonings. Some writers start from the commission; some dwell especially on family baptisms; and others on circumcision; making all other evidence auxiliary to their main proposition—and, yet, all arrive at the like practical conclusions. However concise the words of the apostle, they are sufficient of themselves, with the Mosaic narrative before us, to maintain and defend our practice against all that ever was, and, I believe, that ever can be, fairly brought against it from the Scriptures. The argument is open to scrutiny and attack; and if proved to be irrelevant or invalid, it will be candidly abandoned; but not before. The reader, however, will find every text of Scripture, and every material argument and criticism usually adduced in defence of Infant Baptism, interwoven with the materials of this discourse—not as leading evidence—but as subsidiary proofs, which are adduced in reply to the various objections brought by our opponents to our practice. In fact, I am not aware that anything important on the question, *on either side*, has been omitted in the present pages.

Few people are aware on what limited or isolated portions of divine truth certain doctrines and doings are based, and that, too, properly and firmly. Take the Lord's Supper as an instance. We have its institution at first by Christ, and one clear but incidental allusion to it afterwards in the New Testament. We have nothing more that we can confidently refer to in support of its observance and perpetuity. Take the change of the Sabbath. One or two indirect declarations are all the inspired men afford us on this subject; yet these are deemed sufficient to induce all but a universal observance of the first day of the week, instead of the seventh. It will be found, that many sentiments entertained, and duties performed, are grounded on single passages of God's word, or deduced by inference from some few sentences or allusions of the sacred writers. He that objects to receive any part of the will of God, because he has not given it line upon line, betrays a disposition not to acquiesce in it at all, were it reiterated a dozen times, and in the plainest forms of speech. A single command from a master should be sufficient for his servant; and he is a naughty dependent, subject, or son, who insists on having it repeatedly enjoined, before he will obey it. One thing is hardly questionable, that if the apostle had but once stated in simple terms, what I have proved his language clearly and necessarily implies—that 'some hundreds of

'thousands of infants and children were baptized by God 'himself in the Red Sea,' and that this ancient baptism was 'a pattern and prelude of baptism under the gospel,' there had probably never existed an Antipedobaptist society in the world.

But, may I be allowed again to ask, Can our opponents find a single instance in the Word of God commanding the baptism of such characters as they contend should only undergo this rite—people trained up to adult age in the knowledge and belief of the gospel? If once discovered, how would they dwell and enlarge upon it, as conclusive in their favour! But not a case nor a text of the kind can they discover in the whole inspired volume. They cannot place their hand on a single passage which plainly says or clearly implies, that spiritual regeneration, or a good Christian education, is a necessary prerequisite to Christian baptism. Nor can they discover the slightest intimation, in the entire compass of the holy oracles, that infants should not still, as far as capable, participate in all the rites and privileges, enjoyed by their parents, in the church of God. Were such a text to be found, though it were alone in God's book, and were it as concise as Paul's reference to the baptism in the Red Sea; our opponents would triumphantly avail themselves of it against Infant Baptism, and feel that they required nothing further to establish, on an immovable foundation, the doctrine of exclusive adult believers' baptism!

Further, if only one new and well authenticated emendation of the Greek Testament were discovered, stating, or satisfactorily implying, that infants were not baptized by the apostles, and that these holy and inspired men were verily opposed to the ceremony; it would be hailed as a heavenly wind-fall, and cited in a thousand publications, as a striking proof, that baby-sprinkling was unlawful, and should no longer be administered among Christian people! If, further, they could only find one verse in the Old or New Testament, proving, from Jewish purifications and proselyte baptism, that children and infants were precluded from them; and that, in administering this rite, the priests themselves actually dipped the unclean, instead of sprinkling them with water; what joy and rejoicing would there be in their ranks; and their many pulpits would ring with loud and exulting acclamations! Or, if it could be demonstrated by but one single passage, that *Baptizo* did really, truly, unequivocally, mean to dip under water, and nothing less or more; we may feel confident of the delight with which

such a discovery would be hailed among our earnest immersionists! In a word, when they can produce a single text supporting these practices more plainly and firmly than that we have cited from Paul, in defence of Infant Baptism, we shall be prepared to surrender our special argument, and labour to raise our assumptions on some other Scriptural data.

In perusing the numerous successive volumes written by our opponents, in support of, what they term, adult believers' immersion only, you will discover not only how, in most instances, one author follows the course pursued by his predecessors, but also how very few are the texts on which all of them really rely, in order to maintain their practice. For example—to prove that people should be made disciples *before* they are baptized, we are always and, as far as I recollect, only referred to John iv. 1: 'Jesus made and 'baptized more disciples than John.' For the baptism of spiritual believers we are invariably pointed to Mark xvi. 16: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' and to Acts viii. 37: 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou 'mayest be baptized'—though this latter passage is deemed an interpolated and unauthorized sentence by nearly all competent scholars; while the former, *if* authentic, is freely admitted to have no reference whatever to infants or young children. As to the mode of baptism, two or three texts are chiefly relied on. Mr. Noel lays his chief stress on that of the Eunuch. *Mode*, p. 92. Mr. Pengelly, on that of Christ baptized in the Jordan. p. 37. And most others rely on the expression, 'Buried with him in baptism.' None of which passages, fairly construed, will support their system of dipping.

To hear a Baptist talk or preach on this subject, one might fancy the New Testament was full of passages clearly and directly proving, that none but regenerated and well-trained adult believers were baptized by John, or by any immediately succeeding administrators of this rite. And that, as to the act of dipping them, it was discoverable in almost every page of the New Testament! That these writers have misinterpreted the few texts on which they chiefly rely, in defence of both their mode and subjects of baptism, I devoutly believe, and think I have clearly shown. In the present remarks, my aim is simply to notice, that, if I may be regarded as building my argument on a contracted basis, our opponents are confessedly doing the like. Which side of this debate has the better and broader foundation for its superstructure, let the intelligent and impartial critic decide.



This section may be suitably closed with the following extract from Mr. Isaacs' valuable work, 'Baptism Discussed.'—  
 'Having replied to the objections against Infant Baptism, it  
 'may not be improper to turn the tables upon our opponents,  
 'and to show them that their believers' baptism is not the  
 'believers' baptism of the New Testament. Our Lord and  
 'his apostles placed baptism at the commencement of a  
 'Christian life; while our opposing brethren do not administer  
 'it till the candidate has made considerable progress in  
 'Christianity. I will enumerate several particulars.

1.—'The apostles never delayed baptism after a person  
 'believed in the divine mission of our Lord. If our brethren  
 'followed their example they would baptize children of three  
 'or four years of age, because at that period they believe in  
 'Christ; and then the controversy might be ended; for  
 'it would not be worth while to contend for an earlier  
 'administration.

2.—'John the Baptist and the apostles baptized "unto  
 'repentance." That cannot be done by those who require  
 'repentance unto life as a necessary preliminary.

3.—'Paul and the three thousand on the day of Pentecost,  
 'were baptized "for the remission of sins." Our brethren  
 'contend for justifying faith as a qualification; and they  
 'grant that justifying faith includes forgiveness; they cannot  
 'therefore baptize for the remission of sins.

4.—'The apostles exhorted people to be baptized, that  
 'they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our brethren  
 'look for proofs of the reception of the Holy Ghost before  
 'they give the ordinance once.

5.—'Our Lord and his apostles administered the rite  
 'before they taught the peculiarities of the Christian religion.  
 'Our brethren require a knowledge of these peculiarities as a  
 'qualification for it.

6.—'The primitive Christians "were baptized *into* Christ."  
 'Our brethren insist upon our being in Christ preparatory to  
 'the ordinance.

7.—'The apostles placed baptism *before* the putting on of  
 'Christ. Gal. iii. 27. Our brethren the contrary.

8.—'Baptism stands before sanctification. 1 Cor. vi. 11.  
 'And is the appointed means of producing it. Eph. v. 26.  
 'Our brethren reverse this order.

9.—'The apostle says, "Baptism does save us." And the  
 'apostle Paul, to the same purpose, says, "He saved us by  
 'the washing of regeneration," &c. Our brethren require us

‘to be in a state of salvation prior to baptism ; and, therefore, according to them, there is no sense in which we can be said to be saved by baptism.

‘I cannot find any other ends of the ordinance mentioned in the New Testament, than what are contained in the above particulars. Now, as none of these ends are answered by the adult washings of our brethren, I am quite at a loss to know what utility they possess. All the above particulars apply to the baptism of infants of three years old, and the more important ones to infants of any age. It is not necessary that *all* the ends should meet in every individual who receives it. Our Lord was not baptized unto repentance, or for the remission of sins ; but that he might be enabled “to fulfil all righteousness.”’ p. 260.

SECTION ELEVENTH.—*Most objections raised against Infant Baptism now, would have equally applied to the baptisms in the Red Sea, and under the ceremonial law.*—To this topic we have occasionally, if not repeatedly, alluded before. Still, at the risk of being charged with needless, if not endless, repetitions, we must recur to it more in detail, and present the argument in a more concise and connected point of observation. This part of our discussion is too important in the inquiry, and too relevant to our purpose, to be partially noticed or hastily dismissed. I must here premise, that though we have not based baptism on the same ground as circumcision ; yet, it is worthy of remark, that many of the objections of our opponents to this Christian ordinance, equally apply to the admitted facts and principles involved in that ancient Abrahamic institution. Indeed, it is surprising to hear intelligent and Christian men arguing as if, by circumcising little children, God had performed an act not only useless, but absolutely ridiculous. They do so, not directly, but by inference. For example, they contend that it must be absurd to baptize babies, *because* they cannot understand or consent to the ceremony ! But it must have been equally so to have circumcised children of eight days old ! They argue that the baptism of infants must be useless, *because* children might have every advantage without it. But the like would have applied to infants consecrated to Abraham. In a word, whether sensible of it or not, they charge God foolishly, or as acting on principles which will not bear the test of a fair and manly investigation !

OBJECTION I.—*Infants, having no religious knowledge,*

*nor faith, nor piety, nor personal guilt, cannot be fit subjects for baptism.*—But the like was the case with the ancient Hebrew infants. And if the objection be valid in the former instance, it must have been so in the latter. The young Israelites were as ignorant, faithless, guiltless, and as destitute of manifested religion, as any that were born in the days of Paul, or as any existing at the present time. Yet, the blessed God, who is infinitely wiser than we are, and who perfectly knows the proper subjects for this ordinance, actually baptized hundreds of thousands of these little ones in the Red Sea, as well as having caused millions of them to be baptized afterwards. Paul pleads this fact for our learning and guidance. So also, without faith, knowledge, guilt, or religion, Jehovah caused multitudes of children to be circumcised, and then took them into a religious covenant with himself. These apparent disqualifications, therefore, can be no just obstacle to the baptism of infants now.

OBJECTION II.—*Children may have all the advantages of religious instruction without baptism as well as with it.*—This, too, might have been the case with the young Israelites in the wilderness and in Canaan. But God, in wisdom and love, baptized them first; and the fact of his doing so shows that, according to his plan, they would not have been properly entitled to these privileges without a due initiation into them. The Abrahamic covenant blessings might have been enjoyed without circumcision; but God ordered all the male infants to be first circumcised. Baptists might admit persons to full communion in their societies without dipping them; but yet they dip them first. The possession of property is one thing; a legitimate title to it is another. Besides, the baptism of a real Christian adult confers not a single benefit or privilege which millions do not as fully enjoy without being immersed. Still our opponents contend that all of them should first be thoroughly washed. This objection is also invalid.

OBJECTION III.—*Religion is a personal thing, which children cannot possess, and should not therefore be religiously baptized.*—This, however, would have held equally true of the children baptized in the sea, circumcised to the Abrahamic covenant, or dedicated to Christ by a Baptist minister; for personal religion was then, and still is, as requisite in those cases as in our water-baptism. If by personal piety, we are to understand the regenerating operation of the Holy Ghost, it is admitted, that a child may be the subject of this gracious work as well as an adult; and, probably, it takes place ten times

as often. But where is it said, that vital religion is essential to a valid baptism? It surely was not so in the case of the Israelites; nor in that of the disciples of John; nor those of our Lord's apostles; nor is it so now, even among the Baptists themselves, as the consecration of a hypocrite is as passable, and as permanent, in its ecclesiastical character, as that of a person whose religion is the divine work of grace in the heart. To confound profession with genuine piety, would outrage all the great principles of the gospel of Christ.

OBJECTION IV.—*Children ought not to be bound by baptismal covenants, to which they cannot give their intelligent consent.*—So the mere rational Hebrew might have objected, respecting the baptismal covenant in the Red Sea, the covenant of circumcision, the covenant of Sinai, and other subsequent Jewish covenants. Yet, as our opponents admit, God bound tens of thousands of babies in these covenants, by circumcision, or by baptism, without their knowledge or consent. So Baptist parents often bind their children by deeds, wills, and conditions, of which the little ones, at the time, are totally unconscious; and of which they can come to the knowledge afterwards only by hear-say—just as adult Pedobaptists subsequently learn that they were dedicated to Christ by baptism in childhood; or just as the grown-up children of our Baptist friends discover that they were consecrated to Christ in infancy, without the symbolical purification of water.

OBJECTION V.—*Infants may be saved without baptism as well as with it.*—So the infants baptized in the Red Sea might have been saved without their baptism; and so might pious unbaptized adults, in every part and age of the world. The male seed of Abraham might have been saved without circumcision, as well as the female; and so might the children of Baptists without being formally dedicated to God. But, may not children be the subjects of any rite or service which does not save their souls? Are professors of the gospel to do nothing but what is saving—nothing, as an act of obedience to the divine will; to preserve the orders of God's house, or to confer on their offspring a good standing in religious society, and proper relative advantages in the seminary of the gospel? This objection involves a mean, mercenary, and untenable principle of religious reasoning.

OBJECTION VI.—*Christian baptism is a New Testament rite, but you regard it as an Old Testament Institution.*—I reply, preaching, prayer, praise, and adoration, are New Testament duties, performed by all devout disciples of Christ;



yet, they were also Old Testament duties, performed by all holy Israelites. A deed is not less Christian because it was also Jewish. Infant Baptism of ancient date intimates, that it was essential in the remotest times of the church; and its perpetuity under the gospel dispensation assures us, that it is still an important institution, and to be continued for ever. It might be said, with equal truth, the Christian Passover is a New Testament ceremonial; but that says nothing against its having been, in another form, an Old Testament one also. In fact, as previously shown, the latter contains little or nothing new; or that had not pre-existed, though its associations and developments were not precisely similar.

OBJECTION VII.—*Adult baptism is expressly affirmed—Infant Baptism is founded only on inference.*—The like may be averred of the people baptized in the Red Sea. None are literally named. The presence of women and children is only implied; and, yet, the latter were as certainly present and baptized as the men. In all cases a fair deduction is as valid as a positive declaration; and is sometimes acted on when unequivocal injunctions are neglected, and that, too, by our opponents, as well as by other Christian people. Males only are said to have communed at the Lord's Supper; but our brethren infer, that females also partook of the sacramental elements; and they act on the inference, and disregard the literal language of Scripture! To keep the seventh day, is plainly and positively commanded, while the observance of the first, instead of it, is founded only on inference; and, yet, our objectors, with very few exceptions, neglect the positive command, and act only on the inference! Our opponents have positive evidence that none but persons immediately proselyted from Judaism and heathenism were baptized by the apostles; yet, they infer that adult Christians—trained and educated in gospel principles—may be also baptized; and, without the least positive proof, they immerse only the latter! In fact, numerous cases might be named to shew that our opponents frequently and entirely disregard facts, examples, and unequivocal injunctions, and act on mere deductions! And, yet, they gravely condemn us for being guided by inference in the case of Infant Baptism! That our conclusion in favour of baptizing children, is drawn from better premises than those on which the baptism of well-instructed, regenerated, and pious Christian adults, is founded, I think most competent and candid judges would readily decide.

OBJECTION VIII.—*Belief is placed before baptism in*

*most statements of this gospel ordinance.*—And so belief must have been exercised by the adult Hebrews before their baptism in the Red Sea. The grown-up people believed Moses, or they would not have followed him out of Egypt into the desert and the deep. Ex. iv. 29-31. Abraham's faith preceded his own circumcision and that of his household. Before a Baptist parent dedicates his child to God, he, himself, must have faith in Christ. But faith was not required of Abraham's infant dependents, nor of the infants baptized in the sea, nor at Corinth, nor at the Jordan, as a prerequisite to infant baptism, infant salvation, infant circumcision, or infant dedication in the vestry of a Baptist chapel. Our friends usually consecrate their children to God, before the latter have the least notion of faith; why, then, may not our little ones have a capacity for baptism without faith? Let it be remembered, that systematic teaching of religion is placed after baptism in Christ's commission; and that water-baptism is placed before spiritual baptism in his conversation with Nicodemus. I may add, that in the language of the gospels, love goes before salvation, holiness before heaven, and labour before eating. Must infants, then, love or be lost, be holy or forfeit heaven, and labour or starve!

OBJECTION IX.—*Many baptized children are neither morally nor spiritually better for having undergone this ceremony.*—The same may be said of thousands baptized unto Moses by Jehovah himself, for they perished in the wilderness. The case is strikingly exemplified among those of twenty years old and upwards, who were baptized in the sea, nearly all of whom died in the desert because of their transgressions. Yet God, who foresaw this, baptized them all, old and young, in a manner the most solemn and impressive, in the cloud and in the sea. Millions of children, afterwards, circumcised and baptized at God's command, were not personally the better for it, either morally or spiritually. Numerous children, dedicated to God by Baptist parents, openly or privately, are no better for it. The like may be said of thousands of adults, dipped by some of the greatest divines of their own denominations; for they certainly are no better for it. Many who are religiously and carefully educated, who have long heard the gospel, and been taught at home by Christian parents, are no better for it. How weak and frivolous must that objection be, which, when its principle is fairly and extensively applied, would not negative Infant Baptism only, but numerous other admitted, important, and imperative, duties of Christianity! The

question is, not success, but duty. It is enough for us, that Infant Baptism was intended and calculated to benefit the young ; and so was infant circumcision—or the little Hebrews would not have been subject to these ceremonies in the sea, or in the time of Abraham, and for centuries afterwards. These institutions are not invalidated because success does not always follow their observance. Besides, they were appointed as symbols of doctrine, as well as services for individual advantages, and, consequently, are always useful.

OBJECTION X.—*No immediate mental or bodily benefits result from baby-sprinklings.*—Nor, that we are aware of, did any direct benefits of the kind spring from the baptism in the sea, or in the wilderness ; nor do any arise now from the dedication of Baptist children in chapel vestries. This objection is suggested by the frequent remark, in certain quarters, that adult bathing is very beneficial to people's nerves and physical strength ; while sprinkling a few drops of water on the head of a man, woman, or child, can be of no real advantage to any of them. Cases are recorded and current, among our antagonists, shewing, that some people have lost their pains and complaints in the baptistry!—intimating that God has evidently placed his mark of approval on adult dipping, by making it a sanatory blessing. Long dissertations are given us on the benefits of bathing in salt and fresh water—designed to display the wisdom and goodness of God in instituting immersion as the mode of baptism—a single plunge in a person's lifetime! But, then, on the other hand, stories are neither few nor imperfectly authenticated, of persons who have injured their health, and even lost their lives, through being dipped in cold water! We may fairly put the one argument over against the other. However, we never heard it even hinted that an infant ever lost its life or its health by affusion baptism!

OBJECTION XI.—*How useless to baptize the children of ignorant and ungodly parents.*—This objection is based on the supposition that such people will not follow out the purposes involved in their children's dedication to God. In this way God might have reasoned at the Red Sea, and might have separated certain hapless infants from those who had wise and holy parents, and have baptized only the latter. There were, doubtless, in Israel, many very unrighteous fathers and mothers—and God knew them well beforehand—who neglected the obligations specially due to their circumcised children. But the children of the ignorant and unholy

were baptized and circumcised the same as the offspring of the most godly and devout in Israel. If parents, who bring their children to the font, neglect their subsequent duties, or know not how properly to fulfil them, this forms no good argument against their attending a prior duty. It was never pleaded against circumcising certain infants, that their parents did not possess the qualifications or dispositions necessary for training up their little ones in the religion of the patriarch. Indeed, I question if any Baptist minister, when requested to dedicate the children of his hearers to God, ever refused, because he feared the latter were not truly and spiritually converted, or were unlikely to train them up as Christian parents ought to do. Nor, is it likely, that any opponent would advise ungodly people not to send their children to a sabbath school, because there existed a danger lest the home teaching, in the week, might counteract the religious teaching of the Lord's day!

Because a man is not likely or able to perform a second relatively good act, that constitutes no reason why he should not perform the first. If parents cannot or will not duly teach their baptized children, the ministers and friends of Christ will rejoice to have the opportunity of doing it for them. The baptism of infants into the congregations of the Lord supposes that the people of God will take a lively interest in their religious welfare. This is frequently done, as in our sabbath schools and similar institutions; and, if not done universally, the evil arises from the inactivity of the churches, or the sin of their parents, and is not to be traced to the doctrine of baptism, which enjoins those who baptize people to teach them the gospel of Christ. Besides, as previously stated, how perplexing for ministers to have to determine, in all cases, the line of demarcation between the parents whose children might, or might not, be devoted to God in the ordinance of baptism. Moreover, this rite was intended to be a benefit to the church as well as to the infants; being a standing memorial of the outpouring of the Spirit; an ordinance teaching the necessity of divine influence, and the purity of heart and life. To be the medium of such instruction, and the recipients of such advantages, the children of ungodly parents are as fully qualified as those of the best Christians in the world.

OBJECTION XII.—*There is no explicit command or clearly recorded instance of Infant Baptism in the New Testament.*  
—Nor is there a clear or express declaration in the Word of



God, showing that a single infant was baptized in the Red Sea, or ate the manna in the wilderness. Nor is there any literal record that a single child passed through the Red Sea; nor are we told that any women were baptized unto Moses in crossing the deep. But, unquestionably, females were baptized in the sea, and children passed through with them, and were also baptized, for all that. The omission of the names, infant, child, baby, or little one, has nothing to do with this question, or in the decision of it. They are, undoubtedly, included under the terms, 'our fathers,' 'all the people,' 'families,' and 'nations.' We never read that the apostles baptized young men, young women, old men, matrons, husbands, or wives, shoemakers, tailors, drapers, or builders. Are we, thence, to infer, that no such persons were ever baptized, because they are not specifically designated, and should not be in the present day! Where is there any account of the baptism of the Virgin Mary, of Mary Magdalene, of Lazarus and his sisters, or of the twelve apostles, or of numbers more, of historical note, in the sacred pages? Must we, therefore, conclude, that, because they are not named among the baptized, they never received this rite? And, if we dare not do that, why must we assume, that children were not baptized, simply because they are not distinguished among the people, and particularly mentioned by the sacred historian?

Because Paul is said to have baptized adults, it is argued, that, therefore, he did not baptize children. It might as justly be argued, that as John and Peter are said to have baptized only men, therefore, they never baptized women. It would be deemed a very unsatisfactory kind of reasoning, were one to infer that, because a person is recorded to have drunk wine, he, therefore, never drank water; or, because he is said to wear silk, he never wears cotton! Our opponents, who enlarge so eloquently on Scripture precedent, and on the necessity of cleaving closely to them, would do well to bear in mind, that no adults, except such as were immediate converts from Judaism or heathenism, are ever said to have been baptized to Christianity. How would they meet the arguments of some clever Quaker opponent, without inference? 'Friend, 'give me a clear example, or a plain command, from the New Testament, to baptize persons trained up in Christian principles.' This would be a poser to our most confident and vaunting antagonists.

Whether conscious of it or not, our brethren employ nothing but inference—and that most illogical—in support of believers'

and immersion baptism. They merely dogmatize, or act the oracle, when they should occupy the form of modest Christian inquirers. Their objecting to our reasoning out our convictions and practice, indicates a fear of the results of our logic. While they boldly and continually challenge us to produce an instance of purely infant baptism, we can, with equal confidence, reiterate our demands of them to produce a single instance of what may be called purely Christian adult baptism. A person untaught the religion of Christ generally, and merely crying for mercy, is rather seeking to become a Christian or disciple of Christ, than having consciously attained to that distinction. The adults originally baptized, submitted to the rite, not because they felt they were already Christians, but from a desire to become so, and to be regarded as such through baptism. Our opponents admit, that no person was a recognized disciple of Christ till he was baptized. Then, surely, he could not have been a recognized Christian before undergoing this initiatory rite. Convinced or impressed sinners, imploring the pardon of their sins, are surely distinguishable from truly enlightened and sanctified Christian people! As said before, a person is not viewed as a freemason, till he is duly inducted to the masonic craft; nor an apprentice to a trade, till he is bound; nor a pupil in a school, till he is properly matriculated.

An *Anonymous* writer, on this *last important point*, justly observes, ‘But the *examples* of Scripture, our brethren are ‘wont to urge, are all on their side.... This is confidently, ‘indeed, asserted; but, upon a closer examination, will be ‘found a manifest mistake—*there being not, in the whole* ‘*Scriptures, one single instance of the baptism for which they* ‘*plead, and which is practised among them, viz:—that those* ‘who were born of Christian parents are to be suffered to ‘become adults before they are baptized. This, it is to be ‘observed carefully, is the point in question betwixt us. As ‘for the case of adult proselytes, or converts to Christianity, ‘these, we all agree, are not to be baptized till they profess ‘faith. The Scripture instances, therefore, of such proselytes, ‘baptized upon such profession, are of no pertinence nor ‘weight at all in the controversy before us; for these are ‘exactly consonant to our sentiments and practice. The only ‘point in debate is—what is to be done with the infants of ‘these proselytes? Are they to be baptized with their parents? ‘Or, are they to be let alone till they become adult, and then ‘be baptized upon their personal profession? This latter ‘our brethren say; but have not in the whole Scriptures, I

‘again affirm, one instance of such practice; no, nor any shadow or appearance of it. Their boasts, therefore, of Scripture instances, precedents, examples, are mere sound, and nothing else. Whereas, the instance of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 15, (not to mention Stephanas and the jailor,) strongly favours our practice, whose faith alone is mentioned, and immediately it is added, “Her household” [or family] “were baptized.”’

Mr. Noel admits that there is no instance recorded ‘in the New Testament where the persons baptized are said to be ‘the children of believing parents.’ p. 239. His mode of accounting for it is quite unsatisfactory. He says, the history of the churches is too short to have admitted such a result. But the church at Rome was not less than thirty years old when Paul preached to the brethren there in his own hired house. (See *Barnes on Rom.* p. 15.) The church at Jerusalem, which dated back, at least, to the day of Pentecost, is known to have been in existence when the Apostle of the Gentiles was sent, under escort, to Cæsarea, about thirty-one years afterwards. When John wrote his epistles to the seven churches of Asia, most, if not all, of them, were, probably, not of less than forty years standing—periods long enough, in all conscience, for infants and children of baptized parents to have been themselves baptized in adult age, had such been the custom; and, one might suppose, of sufficient interest to have come out somewhere in the sacred narrative, if of frequent occurrence. We lay no other stress on this circumstance than to shew that no instance is on record of the baptism of grown-up children, whose parents were baptized when they were babes or little ones; or, in other words, to prove that *Christian Baptism*, as now generally practised by our opponents, is unnoticed in the New Testament—every instance on record being simply that of a proselyte from the ranks of the gentiles or the Jews—baptized immediately after his belief of Christianity.

Dr. Mayo having remarked, that the Baptists ‘have not a single precedent, in Scripture, of their subjects of baptism, the children of Christian parents, whose baptism was delayed till they were of adult years to make a profession of faith;’ Mr. Booth replied, ‘But, if this objection have any weight, it must be with equal force against the continuance of baptism among Christians; or the administration of it to any description of subjects, except in reference to such persons as are converted from Judaism, Mahomedanism, or Paganism.’

To this, Mr. Isaac rejoins, ‘I think exactly with Mr. B. upon this point. I only regret that he did not sooner discover the fallacy of this argument. In the mouth of Dr. Mayo it was only a retort. Mr. B. had been toiling through seventy pages, to prove the unlawfulness of Pedobaptism, because there are neither precepts nor precedents for it in the New Testament. When he had nearly finished his demonstration, he recollected how the Dr. had used this Baptist weapon against the Baptist system. Mr. B. does not pretend that he can find his subjects of the ordinance in the Bible; and yet, he will not allow us to retort his argument about precepts and precedents. Why? because it would destroy the permanency of the rite: he therefore concludes that it is of no weight. Astonishing! What we complain of is, that our brethren should continue to press us with an argument which they grant is good for nothing, and which will just as well overturn their system, and the ordinance altogether, as ‘Infant Baptism.’ p. 8. The fact is, that baptism, like circumcision, was intended principally for infants and children; and that the circumcision or baptism of *adults*, was the exception, arising from the introduction of the rite, at once, among the first converts to Judaism and Christianity.—On this last objection I have enlarged, because every Baptist reiterates it, as though unanswerable and conclusive, in opposition to Infant Baptism.

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## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It now only remains to bring the present investigation to a close. This I shall do, by giving the reader a concise review of the principal evidence previously adduced, and, I presume, fully and clearly established, in defence of Infant Baptism; and by noting the consequent obligations of parents to dedicate their offspring to the glorious Trinity, through the Christian rite of water-baptism; of congregations to take special interest in the children baptized in them; and of the baptized themselves, in advancing life, to carry out the design of their early dedication to God.

FIRST.—A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FOREGOING DISCUSSION.

(1.) I shall assume, that the preceding evidence and arguments have satisfactorily proved, that Paul, in his address



to the Corinthians, fully recognizes, and plainly sanctions, Infant Baptism, under the gospel dispensation. I do not argue, that he does this by a direct assertion or a positive command, but by an allusion, which cannot be rightly construed, except on the supposition, that he viewed this service as existing, common, and proper, in his own day. The inference drawn from the whole is, that Infant Baptism, in which parents, through their pastors, dedicate their children to Christ, and, thereby, induct them into the teachings, privileges, and obligations of Christianity, is a scriptural, interesting, and most important duty.

Numerous other passages of the Word of God, sustaining the same doctrine and practice, I believe, are found in the inspired records, and which, when judiciously and carefully examined, by competent persons, fully corroborate our conclusions. These, I have shown, cannot be understood in any consistent sense but on the assumption, that Infant Baptism was a universal and unquestioned practice among the early Christian people. These texts I have repeatedly referred to in this treatise, and have shown their bearing on the question before us. The numerous and excellent works in which they have been more systematically and largely discussed, I have repeatedly cited or referred to; and to them I beg to direct the attention of those readers who desire to see the evidences founded upon them more largely given than the limits of this treatise would fairly allow. My object was, to establish an argument in support of Infant Baptism chiefly based on a portion of divine truth, not, I think, hitherto adequately regarded, in reference to the proper subjects of this religious rite. I have examined this text the more attentively, because it refers to the first general, and, in all its leading particulars, the 'prelude and pattern' of baptism, administered to the people of God in all subsequent ages. To this the apostle especially and expressly alludes in his appeal to the congregation at Corinth.

(2.) It was, I believe, in imitation of this ancient baptism in the Red Sea, that John, when preparing the multitudes for the approaching kingdom of Christ, baptized them in the Jordan. I believe also that the other apostles of our Lord had this transaction in their mind when they administered baptism to their converts, the same as Paul had in his, while referring to it in his writings—for all the inspired men were taught the proper sense and application of the sayings and doings of the Old Testament by one and the selfsame infallible

Spirit. It is certain that this apostle viewed the baptism in the sea with deep interest; and, doubtless, his divinely enlightened colleagues in the ministry did the same; though they wrote nothing concerning it, any more than they did about the Lord's Supper and many other matters admitted to be of divine origin and of deep interest to religious Christian people. Indeed, that great Hebrew administration of baptism must be contemplated as the key to open several otherwise obscure matters connected with this question in the New Testament—just as many other allusions to the rites and ceremonies of the former dispensation must be clearly comprehended, before certain declarations in the New Testament can be correctly and fully understood. Who, among us, could properly enter into the purport of the baptismal commission of Christ, without looking to preceding practice in such cases? Even John and the apostles, unless they had received immediate, full, and specific, instructions on the point—which is nowhere recorded—must have been at a loss to comprehend their duty in this matter, without a previous knowledge of the baptism of the unclean, of Heathen proselytes, and of the Hebrews in the Red Sea.

(3.) I have shown that the baptism commenced, or, possibly, revived at the Red Sea, was continued to the time of John the Baptist, in the form of purification and consecration of the unclean, and of all infants, (most probably, in conjunction with circumcision, soon after their birth), and in the baptism of the proselyted stranger and his seed. In support of this assumption, I have cited the opinions of several of the most intelligent and candid writers among our opponents, who would certainly have withheld such damaging avowals, unless thoroughly convinced that they were too true to be questioned, and too patent to the inquiring divine, to be buried in oblivion. I have established, or rendered highly probable, an uninterrupted succession of those rites, administered to the young, as well as to others, from the time of Moses to that of Christ, with such variations in their modes and ends, as circumstances rendered necessary. All this being taken as granted, I think we are entitled to demand of the opponents of Infant Baptism, the most clear and positive evidence, from the holy Scriptures, to prove, were it practicable, that, in the reformed and revived church of Christ, after the day of Pentecost, children were no longer associated with their parents in baptism, nor subsequently baptized at their request, before we surrender the doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism. I feel

assured, that whoever fails to refer to the baptism of Moses, the 'Divers Baptisms' under the law, and the baptisms of proselytes to Judaism, as admitted by Noel, Stovel, and others, can never properly understand the question of baptism, as spoken of in the New Testament; and that, being guided by these ancient administrations, he will necessarily arrive at the conclusion, that Infant Baptism is of God.

(4.) To render the duty of baptizing infants, under the gospel economy, still more manifest and indispensable, it has been shown, that the two dispensations of the Old and New Testaments constituted only one sacred, continuous, and uninterrupted society, fellowship, or church, in all their essential principles and holy purposes; that the differences between them consisted in certain rites, ceremonies, and observances, political and Levitical, which were virtually done away at the death of Christ; and that baptism, the passover, preaching, prayer, and numerous other ancient practices, were, with certain modifications, retained and continued in the economy of the Gospel. In both the ancient and the reformed communions there were the same Lord, Lawgiver, and Redeemer; the same Spirit to renew, enlighten, and sanctify men; the same spiritual lessons to be taught and exemplified; and the same great moral and religious necessities to be supplied. It seems not too much, therefore, to assume, that, as infants and children were members of the former congregation, they should also be of the succeeding. As they entered the former religious economy by an act of purification, divinely called Baptism; it is reasonable to expect, that they would be introduced into the second, by a similar symbolical rite; especially as that rite was existing, and confessedly applied to all adults inducted to the gospel dispensation. Certainly, it rests entirely with the opponents of Infant Baptism, to shew when, where, and how, they were excommunicated—if such were the real fact. To prove, that men were received into the Christian church or congregation, on repentance, confession of faith, and the like, even were it universally true, would in no degree affect the question of infants, nor establish the slightest intention of Christ to exclude them from the religious position they always formerly sustained.

(5.) It may be thought, that an undue proportion of the preceding pages has been occupied in answering the objections which have been, or which are likely to be, made against Infant Baptism, or, rather, against the arguments generally

adduced in its support. Many of these objections will appear to some persons of too little weight to have demanded so much space and attention. But, it must not be overlooked, that this part of our discussion, though not very interesting or important to the more intelligent reader, is of no small moment to the generality of inquirers, who are more frequently perplexed with trivial objections, dogmatically asserted, than well-read persons are with more formidable and recondite allegations against our procedure. I have studiously aimed to supply the less intelligent Pedobaptists with replies to all that has been advanced against Infant Baptism, or that is likely to be brought in opposition to it. Nor do I know of any objections to this service, which have not been fairly stated and fully met. At all events, I believe there are none overlooked which can be viewed as very formidable to the usual class of members constituting dissenting Pedobaptist congregations. This part of our treatise has required much examination into our opponents' publications; has prompted much conversation and private debate with Baptist ministers and people; has materially added to the extent of this volume; and has frequently occasioned the repetition of the same sentiments, while meeting the like objections, expressed in varying terms, and placed in different aspects.

I should here emphatically remind or inform the general reader, that *the only two passages* of Scripture which might lead him to suppose, that personal faith was necessary before Christian baptism, are of no, or of but very doubtful, authority. These texts are Acts viii. 37, and Mark xvi. 16. That the former is an interpolation, I have proved before—and that the latter is a very doubtful reading, is equally maintained by Griesbach, Schulz, Tischendorf, and others. And though, in the body of the work, I have discussed this verse, as if it were a genuine part of inspired truth, in order to show that, literally, it contained nothing valid against Infant Baptism; I feel it due to my argument to state the preceding fact; and to prevent the candid student of this question from laying or allowing any stress upon it, as upon a genuine part of the original and inspired oracles of God. While the unlettered advocates of adult believers' baptism only, may still tenaciously cleave to the above texts, in our common version, as true and divine—because apparently upholding their opinion and practice; our intelligent and honest opponents must cease to press them into their service in defence of their principles—while the sincere Pedobaptist will not fail to regard their



lack of positive divine authority as so far sanctioning his own religious views and practice. In fact, they must both now be deemed perfectly *neutral* in this controversy.

(6.) The reader will not do himself justice, while examining this question, who does not keep in mind, that our opponents have but two objections, which can be even remotely denominated Scriptural, against the baptizing of infants. Others branch out from them; some are made without any apparent reference to the Word of God; and many others, if not by far the more numerous, are brought against the abuse of the rite, and the varying character of its advocacy. But, still, two only can be regarded as based on the assumed sense of the New Testament. These are both negatives—*First*, ‘that we have no express, positive, or explicit, precept, command, or example, for Infant Baptism, in the writings of the evangelists or apostles.’ And, *Secondly*, ‘that certain qualifications are required in candidates for this ordinance, which infants do not and cannot possess.’ That these objections are either irrelevant to the question, or entirely invalid, as applied to Infant Baptism, I have proved beyond all fair contradiction. I recur to them here, simply to request, that what we have advanced in defence of this ordinance, may be fully and candidly weighed against these two negative objections to Infant Baptism. Viewing the question in this, its true light; comparing what can be properly adduced against Infant Baptism, as administered by Protestant Dissenting Pedobaptists, and what has been said in its defence in this volume; and even overlooking many excellent works, discussing the subject on other kindred grounds, with much more ability and learning; I fully anticipate, from the intelligent and candid reader, a verdict in favour of consecrating all children to Christ, brought to the font for water-baptism.

(7.) From the list of works published on both sides of this long protracted disputation, inserted at the end of this volume, nearly every one of which I have carefully, and most of them repeatedly, perused, besides examining numerous others, referring incidentally to the points under discussion; the reader will perceive, that I have given the subject an extensive, and very patient investigation. From those written by our opponents, I have extracted all the arguments they contain against infant-sprinkling. I have also quoted many concessions from their publications in favour of my own views and conclusions—taking care, in this latter case, to quote nothing from their writings in defence of our practice

which is not manifestly based on data they could not well dispute, and which was not felt to be true and just, irrespective of any such admissions on the part of Baptist writers. The extent of my reading and researches on this question I mention, not from a spirit of ostentation, but to satisfy the reader, that I have done my best to master the subject, and to place him in possession of the substance of the entire controversy on Infant Baptism.

From the learning, industry, and talent, hitherto employed by so many good, great, and wise, men, to disprove the divine right of infants to Christian baptism; it can hardly be expected that anything further, of moment, can be brought by our opponents in support of their opinions. The arguments on their side of the question appear, to me, to have been long since perfectly exhausted. If, therefore, the testimonies I have given from the Word of God, directly, and the numerous citations I have made from others, in support of my assumptions, have invalidated the interpretations, assertions, and reasonings, of our Baptist brethren—as I believe they have done; and if the reader is of the like judgment, he may safely conclude, that our point has been fully gained; that our verdict cannot be fairly disturbed by any subsequent special pleadings of our antagonists: and that, notwithstanding all their eloquence, learning, and logic, it clearly accords with the revealed will of God, that children should most certainly be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

But even, if after all, any reader should suppose that some of my statements, in defence of Infant Baptism, are incautiously made, and some of my conclusions illogically drawn—of which, however, I have not the slightest conception—yet, I believe, that, independent of such exceptions, he will find abundance of other important and irrefragable testimonies, gathered from the Word of God, and the concessions of several of our most talented opponents, to sustain our doctrine, beyond all fair disputation. There are a few leading points previously and incontestibly established which, viewed apart from numbers beside, leave the practice of Infant Baptism as undoubtedly proved as though it were also sustained by numerous other corroborative testimonies, and as fully so as any other sentiment or practice gathered by induction from the Holy Scriptures. In fact, if a tithe of my leading arguments and evidences, in favour of this service, be admitted to be true and valid, my object may be viewed as

fully and fairly established—for truth can never contradict itself.

SECOND.—THE CORRESPONDING DUTIES OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN.—To establish and enforce the duty of baptizing children into Christianity, in the name of the Blessed Trinity, has been the purport of the foregoing treatise. The arguments therein adduced apply to Ministers and Christians generally, and are designed to prove, that it is their duty to advocate and practise the Christian rite of Infant Baptism. But as *Parents* are the parties more intimately concerned in this service, and without whose sanction and co-operation it cannot be performed; I shall offer a few remarks more particularly appropriate to them.

(1.) I believe it has been fully and fairly established from the Word of God, that *all parents professing the Christian religion are, in duty and consistency, bound to have their children dedicated to Christ, or formally introduced to some Christian school or congregation, by water baptism.*—It has been proved, that the obligation is as clearly and firmly established as many others which all believing and godly parents carefully perform; and the neglect of which they would feel to be highly inconsistent with the profession of the religion of the New Testament. I use the word Christian, in its general sense, for all who believe Jesus to be the Christ, and regard the gospel as the exposition of his heavenly will. As previously proved, we have no clearer or stronger Scriptural evidence in favour of female communion—keeping holy the first day of the week—or for erecting places of worship—attending public week-day religious services—or for supporting Bible, Missionary, or Tract Societies—or for teaching children in Sabbath seminaries—maintaining the schools of the prophets—family worship—and many other Christian duties—than we have in support of Infant Baptism. All those obligations we gather from hints, inferences, and the holy and benevolent genius of the gospel—and not from any express commands, or clear examples, which it contains. Some of these duties we deduce from the practice of the Old Testament saints, rather than from that of the first Christians. Indeed, in favour of many religious services and operations, which are felt to be pious, scriptural, and imperative, half so much cannot be truly said, as in defence of Infant Baptism; and against which, as previously evinced, nothing valid and of moment can be fairly and satisfactorily advanced. In fact,

if you have any parental duties towards your infant offspring, plainly and fully established, this is certainly among them.

(2.) But, while enforcing on parents the obligation of having their children baptized unto God, it must not be overlooked, that *they are equally bound to have the service performed in a manner consistent with his revealed will.*—Ancient and modern superstition has had its inventions in relation to this rite, as it has also had in respect of the Lord's Supper, the grades of the Clergy, and most other ritual and religious arrangements. The employment of sponsors is unscriptural; and when these gossips are induced to make vows to do what they are unable to perform—were they ever so desirous—it is perfectly antichristian. Therefore, never comply with any custom which cannot be attended to without mischief and sin. Again, never have your children dedicated to God in a rite which teaches the soul-deluding heresy of baptismal regeneration. The service, as stated in our Lord's commission, is a dedication of the child to God, or a simple initiation of it to the systematic teaching of the doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel. No passage of God's truth, fairly construed, inculcates the fearful sentiment, that when an adult or child is baptized, he or it is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, made a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; or, in other words, justified, sanctified, and eternally saved. Whatever sacrifices, in worldly concerns, the refusal may occasion, on no account suffer your little ones to be consecrated to the Lord in a ceremony involving and teaching such popish, superstitious, and pernicious errors. As true and good ministers of Christ are now found in almost every limited locality of our land, who will perform the service for you readily, devoutly, and without charge, apply to them; keep your conscience clean; and avoid implicating others in the sin of uttering such solemn and pernicious falsehoods.

(3.) *Remember, that, for parents to neglect the baptism of their children, is to sin against God.*—By sin here, I mean, the sin of omission, or the neglect of a duty, which the Scriptures have, directly or indirectly, enjoined, as plainly as many other duties, which it would be felt exceedingly sinful to omit. In some cases, this may have been the sin of ignorance; or, of educational prejudice; or, of indolence; or, of procrastination; but if, as I have proved, it is a Christian's duty to have his children baptized, the neglect of it must be a sin—not unpardonable, like the sin against the Holy Ghost—



but a criminal neglect of a divine obligation, independent of the motives which occasion or induce it.

Nor am I using this language respecting the neglect of this ceremonial ordinance without highly respectable corroborative precedents.—Mr. Keach says, ‘It is a great sin for believers ‘to neglect’ being baptized. Mr. Gibbs remarks, ‘Though ‘baptism is not necessary to salvation, it is essential to that ‘perfect obedience to the will of Christ, which recognizes his ‘authority in all things; nor can that institution be trivial ‘and unimportant, which is founded on his positive command, ‘and sanctioned by his personal example.’ p. 15. And, for believers to neglect the baptism of their children, cannot be less culpable in the sight of the Lord. Without this formal and official dedication to Christ, and the initiation of them to the church or congregation of professors of the gospel, children have no legitimate Christian claim to religious education, or to a seat in the school of heavenly instruction. They may, indeed, obtain this teaching without an official religious matriculation; but, they cannot get it scripturally, or according to the order which God has laid down—first, baptize, and then, teach them.

Moreover, as previously proved, Infant Baptism implies a pledge, on the part of parents, to train up their children for Christ; and constitutes an extra obligation on the baptized themselves, to serve him when they arrive at years of discretion, or become qualified for active Christian duty. The vows of God are upon them. To omit this covenanting rite, therefore, is to commit an offence against God, and to violate a high obligation to your own offspring. In the *Assembly’s Confession of Faith*, the authors declare, ‘It is a great sin to ‘contemn or neglect this ordinance.’ Dr. Williams says, ‘Those principles, whereby infant children are debarred from ‘their parents’ privileges, from a visible standing in the ‘church of Christ, and particularly from baptism, which is, ‘itself, a privilege, and the only introductory rite to that ‘visible standing among God’s people, are unreasonable, ‘unscriptural, and highly uncharitable. The neglect of baptism, in proportion as it is a duty, is sinful; but it is guarded ‘by no penal sanction.’ Booth says, ‘If infants be solemnly ‘sprinkled by divine right, it must be the indispensable duty ‘of Pedobaptists to contend for it.’ As such we regard it, and should, therefore, deem it sinful not to contend for and practise it. Fleming remarks, ‘The parent must be greatly ‘guilty or criminal, if he saw’ [as all real Pedobaptists do]

‘ that it was the will of his Lord and Master, that infants  
‘ should be thus acknowledged, as taken within the enclosures  
‘ of infinite love and goodness, and yet neglected it.’

(4.) *Further, most parents are left without excuse, on the ground of any supposed difficulties in the way of having their children scripturally baptized.*—The rite is so innoxious as not to injure the health of the most delicate infant; thereby being in perfect agreement with the other sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and stands in contrast to the fuss, fearful apprehensions, and occasional dangers of baptism by dipping. It may be done so quickly, as to occupy little of the parents’ time; and so cheaply, that people, without money or worldly respectability, may always get it done, almost any Lord’s day in the year. The natural protectors of the little ones need only attend the service; no baptistries have to be refilled, no especial garments for the occasion are required; no bustle about dressing and undressing requires to be made. The ceremony, as performed by evangelical nonconformists, is in harmony with the simplicity, unostentatiousness, and purity, of the Christian religion, and which, in accordance with God’s usual plans, may be followed by gracious and benign results from such apparently insignificant operations. By the way, it may be here remarked, that were Infant Baptism attended with the many inconveniences associated with adult immersion, our opponents would not fail to adduce them as a strong objection against our rite; and make a vast deal of them too; though our arguments against their system, based on the like grounds, are treated as entirely invalid; and our adducing them, is resented, as arising from ignorance and most unreasonable and unrighteous motives.

But even, if after all that parents have read in the Scriptures, in the present, or in any other, publications, they should feel, that our doctrine has not been so perfectly established as to remove every doubt or difficulty in the matter; or to answer every question that objectors might suggest on the subject; should they still think that something important might be said on the other side, and in favour of what is called believers’ baptism only; yet, so harmless is this act, as administered by Protestant Dissenters, so exempt from all danger, so free from all pernicious results—physical, moral, and religious—that they should give their children the benefit of the doubt, and certainly have them baptized to Christ—formally inducted into his school, and numbered with his young disciples. If on arriving at adult age, their offspring

should imbibe different sentiments on this subject, they will find no difficulty in then being dipped by the advocates of adult immersion.

Dr. Wall observes, 'If, upon such weighing and consideration, the reasons from God's word, *for* doing anything, do 'clearly outweigh those that may be brought *against* the doing 'it, our duty is to do it.' And we sin, if we neglect it. Dr. Dwight also remarks, 'If the duty of baptizing infants 'can be certainly inferred, or inferred with a probability 'superior to that which is supposed to justify the omission 'of it, the Scriptures require that infants should be baptized.' That such is the fact, I think, the thoughtful reader of this discussion will admit to have been fully established. Whatever God has enjoined upon his people, as a duty, they are bound to perform, however immaterial that duty may appear to any of them. God threatened to slay Moses for merely neglecting to circumcise his son. Ex. iv. 24-26. In fact, the baptism of infants is the highest, the holiest, and, for the time, the only religious deed, parents can perform towards them. What other act, besides prayer, can be equal to the formal dedication of them to the Lord, and thus placing them among his disciples? Let parents view the matter in its true light; and such, I think, will be the impression left on their own hearts.

(3.) *Let not parents neglect this duty, because it may not be considered essential to their children's salvation.*—Doubtless, many persons are sufficiently informed on this question to see, that it should be done, as a matter of order, and in accordance with the revealed will of God. But then, they say, 'It is not a saving ordinance, and their children will 'get to heaven without, as well as with, it. If, like Papists and 'certain Conformists, they thought their children might be lost 'for want of baptism, they would hasten with them to the font.' Besides, they add, '*Baptismal Registers* are not now requisite 'for determining the age of their offspring, in a court of law; 'consequently, it is of no secular advantage to them.' On these grounds, many theoretical Pedobaptists entirely neglect this early Christian dedication of their children to God. But, a moment's devout reflection must convince these professors of Christianity, that the principle on which they act, in this case, is vicious and sinful. Are there not numerous other acknowledged obligations, the omission of which might not be regarded as endangering immortal souls? Children may be saved without being taught in early life to know, love, and

serve God. They may not be lost, because they are not induced to read the Scriptures, or to pray, or to keep the Sabbath day, or to attend a place of worship. But, will godly parents tolerate such juvenile omissions, simply because their children may get to glory in spite of them?

The question ought not to be, whether baptism saves the souls of the young, but whether God has made it manifest that it is his will, that they should be baptized? Many duties are more tests of submission to divine law, than sources of personal benefit. The prohibition to eat certain apples in Eden, was given rather as a trial of obedience, than as a preventive of any physical evil arising from eating them. You will find some persons neglecting public worship, frequently or constantly, on the assumption, that they may be saved without attending it. Others never approach the Lord's table, nor attend a prayer-meeting, nor week-evening lectures, nor a Sabbath school, nor labour to promote the cause of human salvation, nor conduct family worship, nor keep holy the Sabbath day, nor support the means of grace, nor aid the spread of the gospel in the world, because they consider their doing so is not absolutely necessary to get to heaven! But, what truly Christian people would not deem the state of that heart sad indeed, which frames selfish and sinister excuses for neglecting God's commands—however little or large, manifest or obscure—on the ground that, possibly or probably, hell may be escaped, and heaven at length attained, without duly observing them? We are to keep all God's commandments always, whether or not we can understand the reasons on which they are founded. So, whether parents regard baptism as a mere form, or as of great good to their children, is not so much the question, as whether it is the revealed will of God, that it should be administered to them. That it is so, the foregoing discussion has, I think, rendered very manifest.

(6.) *Carry out the ultimate end of baptism in the subsequent education of your children.*—Having dedicated them to the Saviour, and so inducted them to the rights and privileges of religious teaching; see that they are rightly taught, either by yourselves, or by others you may carefully select for that purpose. Baptism is but the entrance into the school of Christ, or into the congregation, where Christianity is taught, preparatively to their entering the particular church or society of persons, having attained to a competent knowledge, and spiritual experience, and a holy life, in Christ Jesus. Parental responsibility, in the religious training of families, in the way



in which they should go, can hardly be sufficiently appreciated. The future course of the young is chiefly determined while living in the domestic circle ; and will, for the most part, be pursued through life. Let pains be taken for the moral and religious education of your little ones, more than for their intellectual attainments, or their worldly prosperity. As the soul is more excellent than the body ; as salvation is more important than any exemption from earthly troubles ; and, as eternity is of infinitely greater moment than time ; see to it that you make the highest interests of your children the chief concern of your parental efforts. Nature dictates the care of them as portions of your own flesh and blood ; and religion commands you to bring them up piously and scripturally. Having dedicated them to God, the additional obligation of consistency, and, at least, of your own tacit vows, urge you to the highest efforts for their spiritual welfare.

See, too, that they are religiously taught only the truth as it is in Christ. Bear in mind, that bad doctrines bring forth evil fruits. Never, on any consideration, if you can possibly prevent it, suffer them to imbibe principles and notions not in accordance with evangelical truth. As you would not suffer your children to attend a school where the pupils are taught or tolerated to work even one sum in a score incorrectly, or to tell one lie, with every twenty truths that they utter ; so, in selecting places of religious education for your children, if it cannot be done at home, see that they are taught nothing unrighteous, nor imbibe any false doctrines elsewhere—either in private seminaries or public institutions. Sabbath schools are seminaries destined of heaven to impart holy knowledge, and Christian impressions, to the youthful mind. But, then, they must be conducted by persons who are too wise and too conscientious to lead their scholars into error on any sacred matters. The seeds of heresy, as small as that of the mustard, sown in the virgin soil of childish minds, will grow to plants and trees sufficiently large for the demons of darkness to lodge in the branches thereof.

In a word, feed them with the pure milk of divine truth, provided for babes devoted to Christ ; and lead their feet gently into the paths of peace and holiness. Confer upon them all the spiritual instruction they are capable of receiving, and to which they are specially entitled, by their dedication to the Redeemer. View and treat them as formally lent or given to the Lord, in baptism ; and train them up for his service and honour. Pray for them, as daily becoming more

and more exposed to temptation, transgression, and death; as having hearts naturally defiled by sin; and which must be renewed by divine grace before they can be meet for the spiritual communion of saints on earth, or prepared to join the glorified church in heaven. Let your holy example be a pattern fit for them to copy; your amiable temper, the spirit they ought to breathe; and your zeal for the cause of God, the holy glow that should burn in their youthful hearts. Do these things, and then we may truly say, 'The promise is 'to you and to your children,' as well as to others that are afar off, whom the Lord our God shall call by his word and Holy Spirit.

THIRD.—THE CLAIMS OF CHILDREN ON THE CONGREGATIONS IN WHICH THEY ARE BAPTIZED.—In accordance with the creed and customary practice of our opponents, persons baptized (with rare exceptions) are at once inducted into their spiritual and select fellowships, and become full members of their inner communion of saints. In this position they are regarded as brethren in Christ, to be *specially* watched over, admonished, corrected, and comforted, by the previously existing fraternity, as occasions may demand. Means are employed to preserve them from error and sin, and to promote their piety and usefulness in the world. In such extra attentions to their duly inducted members, our brethren act with a consistency which all must approve, and in which we recognize a principle we may wisely and beneficially adopt, in reference to the young baptized into our general fellowships.—A remark or two on this head may be proper and useful. What I wish to enforce is—

(1.) *That all duly baptized children should be viewed as pertaining to the kingdom of Christ, and as claiming the special oversight, attention, and care, of the adult members of Christian churches, and of all ministers of the gospel.*—Though we have no detailed accounts of the conduct of the apostles and their first adult converts to Christianity, in reference to this point; yet, from what we know of their proceedings, and of the spirit in which they generally acted, we readily conclude, that the baptized children of baptized parents received unusual attention and care from them. This was natural, and, no doubt, universally observed. And, in the present day, very general and serious attention is paid by Christian people, of all parties, to the rising generation. A numerous host of worthy and excellent people enter heartily into this department of religious

duty, and persevere in it with a zeal and feeling which do themselves much honor; are repaid with a conscious delight of being so divinely employed; and are frequently cheered, by seeing their labours followed by much success. This fact, more than most others, encourages a pleasing hope, that the next adult generation will be intellectually wiser, and religiously better, than this; and the following, an improvement on its predecessor. Much, however, will depend on the doctrines instilled in the youthful mind and heart; the manner of its communication; and the temper and deportment of those who are employed in this momentous, interesting, and delightful work.

(2.) But what I wish more particularly to impress on the mind of Dissenting Pedobaptist congregations is, *That all children baptized in and into them should be regarded and treated as specially belonging to their respective fellowships; and as preferring paramount claims on the attention and the religious care of their pastors and members.*—Let it be an understood and recognized rule, that when children are dedicated to God, through baptism, in a Christian congregation, it involves an obligation, on the part of the regular attendants, to use their best endeavours to train them up in the ways of the Lord. Let parents also understand, that the community, in which their little ones are baptized, feel a particular interest in them, and will do the best in their power to benefit their youthful minds and hearts, in conjunction with the efforts made in the domestic circle. This would render the baptismal service of more importance in the views of parents, than it now generally occupies, and, doubtless, be followed with beneficial results to the young themselves. Nor could it fail to impress mankind with the thought, that Infant Baptism was an ordinance of heavenly origin, and also of great significance and utility. It would constrain the members of the congregation to look on the young as their special charge; and would naturally inspire fervent prayer to God for their spiritual good, and, doubtless, draw down heavenly blessings on their youthful hearts.

It is not here intended to suggest, that *other* children should not be benefitted by religious congregations; or that efforts should not be made for their spiritual benefit also, when they can be brought within the reach of Christian edification. But, it is meant, that the children consecrated to God, in a particular congregation of Christian professors, should be regarded as their peculiar charge; and should have their first

regard and help—just as good parents look first to their own families; and then to others around them, requiring similar assistance. Nor is it supposed that the right and control of parents over their own children are in any degree to be invaded by Christian congregations, because they have been baptized in them. All we mean is, that the former should receive the first and most cordially proffered co-operation in the moral and religious education of their little ones; just as we give our relatives the first and chief aid in the time of need, without ever thinking of abridging their social liberties; and that parents, before they bring their children to us for baptism, should know that such would be the consequence of having it administered among us.

It also accords with the above suggestions, to remark, that all *private* and *domestic baptisms* should be discouraged; and, except on peculiar and pressing occasions, should not be practised. If baptism be, as we have shown it is, an induction of persons, adult or infant, to the public teachings and congregational privileges of Christianity; it seems proper that the rite should be administered in the presence of the people whose subsequent duties it will be to carry out its holy and benevolent intentions. Moreover, if it be an ordinance designed openly to symbolize the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord's Supper is intended to show forth the death of Christ; it harmonizes with the genius of the gospel, that it should be performed before as many others as possible, for their enlightenment and spiritual profit. Whatever is designed for our learning should not, if preventable, ever be done in a corner. I am aware that many difficulties lie in the way of universally, or even generally, carrying out my suggestion. But, where it is practicable, it should be accomplished.

(3.) *The recognition of the principle here advocated, and carried wisely and generally into practice, would greatly tend to illustrate the utility and significance of Infant Baptism.*—The intention and scriptural advantages of this Christian ordinance have been shown before. This would give the rite an additional value in the estimation of the community, and would conduce to silence much of the opposition, now offered by many adult immersionists, against its administrations. As before observed, Pedobaptist congregations are labouring assiduously in educating the young in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and God is graciously blessing their laudable endeavours. But, let it be felt and known, that their attention was



to be particularly directed to the children baptized in their body; that these were deemed the lambs in their respective folds, the special charge of our pastors and their assistants; and a form and a force are given to this initiatory sacrament which could not fail greatly to enlist mankind in its favour. This view also agrees with the attention the Hebrews paid to the young originally circumcised and baptized in their communion; and with the care the primitive Christians unquestionably took of those little ones inducted to their fraternity. The baptized adults became, in a certain sense and measure, subject to the laws and supervision of the brotherhood, for their mutual good. And their baptized children were mutually cared for and benefitted by both parents and their fellow-worshippers—the latter receiving essential help, and the former great benefits, from such a wise and holy arrangement. Let all modern congregations go and do likewise.

FOURTH.—A FEW WORDS TO YOUNG PEOPLE BAPTIZED UNTO CHRIST IN THEIR CHILDHOOD.—This treatise would be incomplete without a few admonitions addressed to my youthful readers formerly dedicated to the Lord in baptism. They shall be concise and plain. May they be understood, felt, remembered, and duly acted upon!

(1.) Fully and clearly understand, then, *That you were not regenerated by the Holy Ghost when you were baptized with water, nor as a consequence of it*; any more than the Jewish infants were circumcised in heart, when they were circumcised in the flesh; or than the Hebrew children were born from above, through their baptism in the cloud and in the sea.—The person that would persuade you to believe the contrary, must himself be fearfully deluded, and must be acting, though unconsciously, as the messenger of Satan, sent to ensnare and injure your souls. Your own eyes and ears must teach you, every day, that water-baptism, by whomsoever administered, in whatever form, and surrounded by whatever pomp, parade, or circumstances, or be the subjects adults or infants, does not change the heart, nor insure its renovation—for it does not and cannot sanctify the life of its subjects. The rite has its uses, and is scripturally attended with many external privileges; but it was never designed to make you new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a sign or a symbol of the baptism of the Spirit, but not that baptism itself; any more than eating the material elements of the Lord's Supper, is necessarily conjoined with spiritually

eating the body and blood of the Lord, unto everlasting life. Indeed, the error of transubstantiation is not more manifest to our ordinary senses, than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and not half so pernicious in its results.

This great spiritual change, however, if not already effected, must be made in your souls before you can become Christ's disciples indeed, in whom there is no guile; and Christians, in sincerity and truth; before you can be prepared for joining the spiritual church of the first-born here, in its select and holy reunions, and, hereafter, in the regions of heaven above. Rest not in outward ordinances, nor till Christ be formed in your hearts the hope of glory; till your minds are imbued with all divine influences; till you are born from above, and are passed from death unto life; or till you have really been made the partakers of the divine nature. To attain this glorious consummation of renovated humanity, you must earnestly study the revealed mind of God, pray fervently for the Spirit of grace, and diligently and devoutly attend those means which God has promised to bless to the salvation of your souls.

(2.) Bear in mind, *that you are imperatively bound to cleave unto the Lord.*—In your baptism you were consecrated to Christ, by those who had a just right and a divine command to do it: and by this relative act you are obliged—unless you subsequently learn, that, unquestionably, it was contrary to the expressed will of God, and to your own everlasting welfare. This you never can feel concerning your dedication to truth, to holiness, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. ‘Say not in your ‘wicked heart,’ I knew nothing of the deed; I did not consent ‘to it; I was devoted to God when I was “as unconscious as ‘a stone;”’ and am not thereby brought under obligations to observe it. You might as justly say, I did not agree to learn to read, to write, to talk, to be truthful in my speech, to be honest in my dealings, or to be virtuous in my conduct; and, therefore, I neither shall do nor be either! And yet, your parents, if they were wise and kind, bound you, as far as lay in their power, to be all this, and more.

Had they put your name into a deed, or a will, or any other document, guaranteeing to you the enjoyment of ease, wealth, or honour; would you say, ‘Their act was nothing to me, I ‘never consented to it?’ The question is, did not your parents perform a Christian duty, when they devoted you to the Lord in baptism; did they not obey the command of God; was it not his doing indirectly, rather than theirs—as it is God's word you hear, though ministers preach and teach it?

and would not a departure from the terms of your baptismal covenant be an apostacy from that glorious Being to whom you were piously given? Had he not a right to bind you to obey his laws, and embrace his gospel? God puts into the hands of Christian parents the keys of the kingdom of God in their families, and they are responsible for their children's good, while under their control and direction. And when they do what is right towards you, it might be said to them, as Christ said to his chief disciples, 'The child that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and him that sent me.'

The Hebrew children, who were circumcised, and likely baptized too, on the eighth day, when they could not understand the nature of the deed, nor give their consent to it, were yet bound by it, and became debtors to do the whole law. The little Israelites, baptized in the Red Sea, with their parents and relations, were thereby brought into a new covenant relation to God; were bound to keep laws, and statutes, and ordinances, of which, at the time, they were utterly unconscious, and, for the breaking of which, probably many of them perished miserably in the wilderness. Your initiation into the general church of Christ binds you to learn and do his revealed will, to the utmost of your power. And remember, that you will be far more criminal than the unbaptized and untaught heathen, if you voluntarily fail to fulfil your baptismal obligations.

(3.) *Finally, persevere in the good way into which your baptism introduced you.*—You were placed among Christians as distinguished from Jews, Heathens, infidels, and open sinners. You are entitled to be designated Christians, in the wide and general sense of that term. You were recognized as young disciples of the Son of God. So far, all was right and promising. The religious duty of parents towards you was, and still is, onerous and urgent. But, as you advance in years, and arise to self-control, those obligations gradually diminish in reference to them, and increase with respect to yourselves—just as it rested with them first to support you; and then, in time, for you to support yourselves. Ministers officially devoted you to the Lord, and prayed for his blessing to follow you all through life. Your parents said, Amen, to the supplications of the men of God. See to it, then, that you do not disappoint their reasonable expectations. As John said to the elect lady and her children, so say these good men, who first consecrated you to him, 'Look to yourselves, that

‘we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that  
‘we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth and  
‘abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He  
‘that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father  
‘and the Son.’ 2 Epist. 8, 9.

Thousands are instructed in vain; in vain they hear the gospel; and even suffer many things in vain. Numerous adults are dipped in vain, and numerous children are affused in vain. Take heed that this be not your own case. ‘Circumcision,’ says the apostle, ‘verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but, if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision ‘is made uncircumcision’ Rom. ii. 25. In the same way, baptism profiteth, if you observe the duties which it teaches and imposes on you. But if you do not, your baptism, as far as your profit is involved, becomes no baptism. The benefits your ought to derive from it, you forfeit by a neglect of the duties which it righteously enjoins upon you. See to it, therefore, that your consecration to the Lord be ever kept in mind; and that you ever act as persons on whose faith, love, and obedience, he has especial claims. Live to his glory, and promote his cause and honour in the world. Rest not without the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and his progressive work in your hearts. ‘Grow in grace and in the knowledge of ‘our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ And may you, at last, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, attain to the joys and the glories of eternal life!

**The End.**



# Works on the Baptismal Controversy.

B A P T I S T.		Edits.
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Anderson—Introduction, &c., to Taylor's Baptist Justified ..	1818	
Birt, Isaiah—Defence of Scripture Baptism.....	N. D.	
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